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## CONTENTS

DECEMBER 2010/JANUARY 2011 ISSUE 108

### FEATURES

### 44 Sweets & Sparklers

An elegant do-ahead party pairs sophisticated desserts with sparkling wines for a new way to celebrate New Year's Eve. *By Tasha DeSerio* 

### 54 Classic Beef Wellington

This traditional British dish is the ultimate Christmas centerpiece.
Our step-by-step guide will help you master it. *By Sophie Grigson* 

### 60 Pear Season

The fruit of the moment is an amazingly versatile ingredient in recipes both sweet and savory. By Melissa Pellegrino

### 66 Tortellini en Brodo

cooking class Learn how to make an Italian holiday classic: tender tortellini stuffed with meat and cheese, and the rich broth they're served in. *By Biba Caggiano* 

### 74 Ham It Up

cook once/EAT TWICE It's not cured. It's not smoked. It's a fresh ham, and it makes a fine, festive roast—with stellar breakfast and dinner leftovers, to boot. By Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough

### 80 Dessert in a Cookie

Your favorite classic desserts—think chocolate mousse, lemon meringue pie, crème brûlée, and more—inspire these outrageous holiday cookies. *By Abigail Johnson Dodge* 



### CONTENTS

### DECEMBER 2010/JANUARY 2011 ISSUE 108











### DEPARTMENTS

15 Marketplace TRY THIS Jícama

WHAT WE'RE COOKING NOW

Cabbage, Cauliflower, Collard Greens, Cranberries, Pomegranates, Turnips, Winter Squash

PRESERVING THE SEASON Citrus **BIG BUY COOKING Yogurt** 

- 24 Make It Tonight **FAST AND FRESH** Just 30 minutes to dinner, start to finish.
- 32 The Reading List **BOOKS THAT COOK** New must-have reads for food lovers.
- 34 Great Finds **GO SHOPPING** Special edition: food gifts for cooks.
- 36 A First Taste of Christmas COOK STORY For Melissa Clark, there was no fragrant tree, no goose, no plum pudding. But the pâté? Divine.

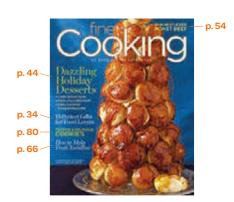
38 Fruitcake

**REPERTOIRE** Try the real thing (rum-soaked fruit!) and there's no going back.

- 40 The Spice of Life THE GOOD LIFE Delicious, good-for-you dips that take inspiration from global cuisines.
- 42 Japanese Chef's Knives **TEST DRIVE** Looking for a new chef's knife? These Japanese models are slim, sleek, and super sharp.
- 87 Test Kitchen Tips, techniques, equipment, ingredients, and more, from our experts.
- 98 Colin Spoelman **FOOD FOR THOUGHT** This Brooklyn-based moonshiner makes whiskey by the flask for a lucky few.

## in every issue

- $6\,$  FROM THE EDITOR
- 8 READERS' LETTERS
- 10 CONTRIBUTORS
- 12 FINECOOKING.COM
- $93\,$  WHERE TO BUY IT
- 94 NUTRITION
- 96 MENUS
- 97 RECIPE INDEX



Cover photograph by Miki Duisterhof (food styling by Carrie Purcell; prop styling by Elizabeth Reilly Kalban); Contents photos by Scott Phillips; illustration by Penelope Dullaghan



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## Inspired by Ingredients



GOOD COOKS KNOW THAT THE BEST-TASTING INGREDIENTS come from the best sources—the farmers and artisans and fishermen who really care about what they do. That's the premise behind Harvest to Heat by Darryl Estrine and Kelly Kochendorfer (published by the same folks who bring you this magazine). We're big fans of this book, its message, and its recipes, many from some of the country's most famous chefs. Eric Ripert, Daniel Boulud, and Thomas Keller, among others, share treasured dishes inspired by ingredients (zuc-

chini flowers, tomatoes, and lamb, respectively) from their favorite farmers.

In the spirit of the book, chef Michelle Bernstein of Michy's, in Miami, takes the idea a step further and shares one of her favorite holiday recipes, inspired by the clams from Stephen Garza of White Water Farms. Stephen has been supplying Michelle's restaurant with top-quality shellfish for years, so it was only natural that his clams play a major part in her festive Shellfish with Fennel, Escarole, and Kale (recipe at right).

### **Holiday Cooking**

In addition to Michelle's recipe, there are lots of ways to celebrate the holidays in these pages, from a classic Beef Wellington (page 56) to a fresh (not cured) roast ham (page 76). And don't miss the legendary Biba Caggiano's authentic Tortellini en Brodo (page 68), a holiday tradition in her hometown, Bologna.

### Quick & Simple

It may be the season to indulge, but you still need easy, every-day dinner ideas. Make It Tonight (page 24) is packed with that very thing: mains and sides that are ready in 30 minutes (and delicious, too).

### For the Baker

It's not really the holidays without spending a Sunday or two in the kitchen baking cookies. Check out "Dessert in a Cookie" (page 80), six irresistible recipes that take their inspiration from classic desserts. We've also got a fruit-packed, rum-soaked fruitcake (page 38) that you'll be hard pressed to give away (let alone re-gift).

As for me, I've got my sights on our cover's Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream (page 48), which has something of a reputation around the office. Between perfecting the recipe and shooting it (three times!), almost everyone here has had a chance to make it. Except me. I'll be doing just that on New Year's Eve.

> Laurie Buckle, editor fc@taunton.com

### For more great holiday ideas, don't miss our:

- iPad app: Fine Cooking Holidays, at the iTunes store after November 1.
- Special Issues: Both Cookies, Brownies, Bars & More and Make-Ahead Holidays are on newsstands now. Party Food & Cocktails will be out Dec. 7. (Or you can order at store.taunton.com.)



## shellfish with fennel, escarole, and kale

A simple but indulgent idea for a holiday feast from Michelle Bernstein of Michy's, in Miami. Serve with crusty bread for sopping up the broth.

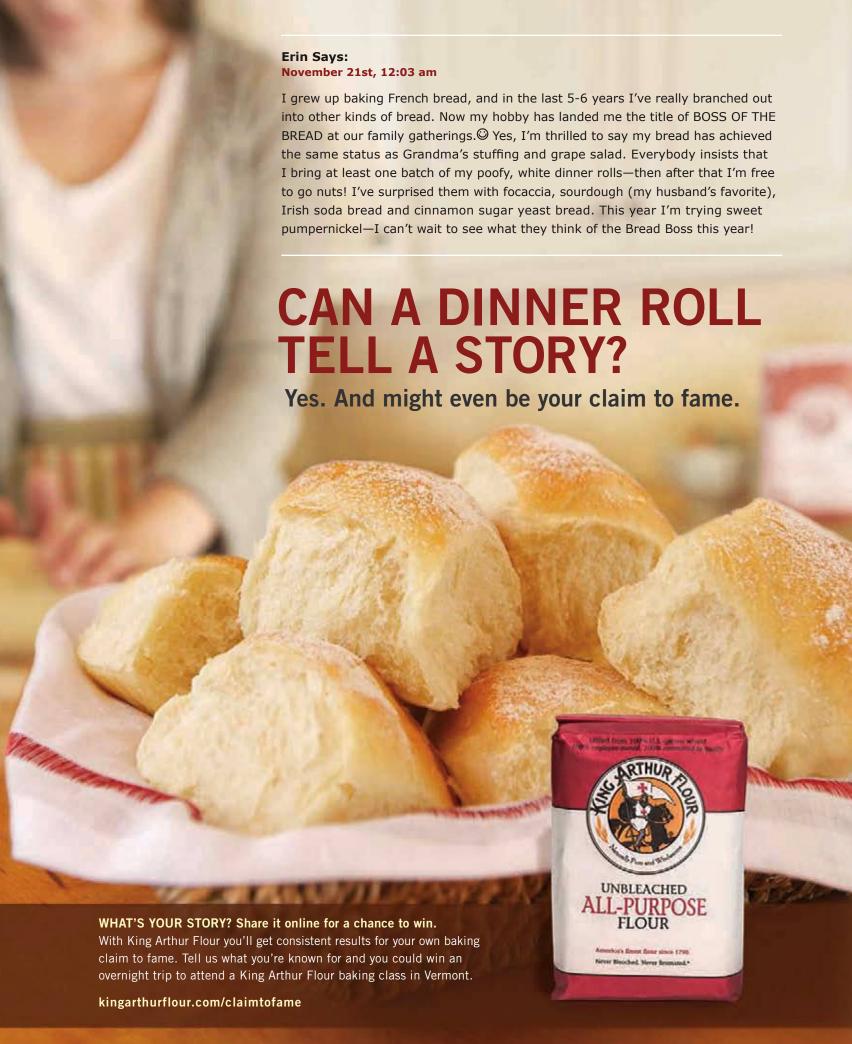
### Serves 4

- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 12 grape tomatoes
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced fennel
- 3 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 cup thinly sliced escarole leaves
- 1 Tbs. amontillado sherry
- 1 cup fish broth or bottled clam juice
- 16 littleneck clams, scrubbed
- 16 mussels, debearded and scrubbed
- 61/2 oz. (1 cup) medium shrimp (41 to 50 per lb.; preferably wild), peeled and deveined, with tails left intact
- 1 cup thinly sliced kale leaves
- tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley; more for garnish
- 1/2 tsp. fresh rosemary, minced Finely grated zest of half a lemon (2 tsp.)
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a small saucepan, heat the butter over medium heat until it turns golden-brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Pour into a small bowl and set aside.

In a 12-inch skillet, heat the olive oil over mediumhigh heat. Add the tomatoes and cook until they start to blister, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the fennel and garlic. Cook, shaking the pan, until the garlic becomes golden-brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the escarole and stir for 1 minute. Add the sherry, raise the heat to high, and cook until it evaporates, about 30 seconds. Add the fish broth and boil until it reduces slightly, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the clams, cover, and cook for 2 minutes. Add the mussels, cover, and cook for 2 minutes. Add the shrimp, cover, and cook for 1 minute. With a slotted spoon, transfer the open shellfish and shrimp to a large bowl and cover loosely with foil. Toss any that do not open.

Stir the kale and pepper flakes into the broth and cook until the kale wilts, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and add the parsley and rosemary. Pour in the browned butter. Add the lemon zest and juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Distribute the broth, vegetables, and seafood among 4 wide, deep bowls. Garnish with parsley.



### THE WINNER

### Two Tools in One

I was making Ellie Krieger's wonderful South Indian-Style Vegetable Curry in your October/November issue, and realized I could turn over my Microplane grater to make a strainer for fresh lime juice (or lemon juice). That way, there were no seeds and no additional tools to wash. -Cathy Camp, Corpus Christi, Texas

We want to hear from you. Send us your best tip and we'll pick a winner from all the entries. Cathy is the winner of this Chef's Choice meat slicer.

CALL OR WRITE: Fine Cooking, The Taunton Press, 63 S. Main St., PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506. Tel: 203-426-8171. Send an email: fc@ taunton.com.



### A New Nut Butter

I'm 13 years old, and I love your magazine. When the October/November issue came in the mail, I saw the nut butter recipe and thought it looked really good. We didn't have any of the nuts you suggested so I used shelled pistachios. I added honey, cinnamon, and cloves; it was delicious!

-Kirrily Ludema, Grand Rapids, Michigan

### **Sweet Success**

We have our own pecan trees, and my husband shells the nuts every fall. I used them to make the Brown Butter Pumpkin Layer Cake (October/November). It's a great do-ahead fall dessert (it gets even better after sitting in the fridge for a day) and makes a beautiful presentation at a dinner party.

-Elaine Shannon, Black Rock, Arkansas

### Living on the Veg

I became a vegetarian about two years ago. I was beginning to think I might have to give up my Fine Cooking subscription, because there weren't enough recipes for me; however, I've been thrilled with the content of the last several issues. You've included not only vegetarian recipe options, but also articles

focusing on eating less meat. I've also noticed that your recipes use judicious amounts of sodium and fat. I hope these trends continue. Thank you for your high-quality content.

—Donna Runte, Jersey City, New Jersey

### Brine, Declined

I'm concerned about the salt we consume and its effect on our health, so I was disturbed to see that in your October/November issue, you suggest dry-brining the Thanksgiving turkey and adding salt to a salad that's already been dressed. I realize that there have to be new recipes in each issue to keep us interested, but turkey has always tasted wonderful if properly cooked—without rubbing salt onto it.

> —Elizabeth Funnekotter, Alexandria, Ontario

### CORRECTION

Please note that the cover photo as well as the photo on page 3 of our October/ November 2010 issue was shot by Romulo Yanes, and the photo of Ellie Krieger on page 32 is by Christopher Hirsheimer.

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James Beard Awardwinner Melissa Clark ("A First Taste of Christmas," page 36) writes about cooking, wine, and travel for numerous publications,

including The New York Times, where she is a regular columnist. She has written 29 cookbooks; her latest is *In the Kitchen with a Good Appetite.* 

- My least favorite food is... tempeh. Seitan I love, but tempeh—not my thing.
- The last thing I ate was... leftover oatmeal from my daughter's bowl.
- My guilty food pleasure is... raw dough. Any kind, but pie dough is my favorite.



Leo Gong ("Tortellini en Brodo," page 66) is a San Francisco-based food photographer. His most recent photo project captured the street food of Oaxaca,

Mexico, and Japan, and he's currently shooting a book about food carts and food trucks.

- My favorite food memory is... when my mom made turtle soup with what we thought was our new pet turtle.
- The strangest thing I've ever eaten is... an escargot lollipop.
- My favorite food splurge is... a good ol' cheeseburger.



Anita Chu ("Citrus," page 20) is the creator of Dessert First, an awardwinning blog. She's also the author of two cookbooks: Field Guide to Cookies and

Field Guide to Candy.

- My drink of choice is... Riesling. I'm a stereotypical girl—I like sweet white
- My latest kitchen purchase was... a set of handmade terra cotta cookie cutters-I bought them at a cookie cutter convention!
- The dish I most want to learn to cook is... dragon's beard candy. It's spun sugar, like cotton candy, but with nuts. The cart vendors in Hong Kong make it by hand.



Fine Cooking contributing editor and baking expert Abby Dodge ("Dessert in a Cookie," page 80), is a widely published food writer and cooking

instructor. She is the author of seven cookbooks, including The Weekend Baker and her latest, Desserts 4 Today.

- If I weren't a cookbook author, I'd be... a lawyer. I love the performance aspect of presenting to a jury-it's kind of like doing a cooking demo.
- My least favorite food is... spinach; it doesn't matter how it's cooked.
- My favorite food splurge is... different every day-my entire life is one big food splurge.



Biba Caggiano ("Tortellini en Brodo," page 66) is the award-winning chef-owner of Biba restaurant in Sacramento, California, where she's headed up the kitchen

for 25 years. She is also a teacher, the author of eight cookbooks, and host of an internationally syndicated television show, Biba's Italian Kitchen.

- The strangest thing I've ever eaten is... If it's strange, I won't eat it—I'm sorry.
- If I weren't a chef, I'd be... an actress, because I'm very funny.
- My favorite comfort food is... chocolate ice cream with raspberries and a splash of cognac, eaten in front of Law & Order.



Photographer Miki Duisterhof (Cover) is originally from the Netherlands but was raised in Africa and Switzerland and later moved to New

York. Her credits include work for Real Simple, Town & Country, and cookbooks by Delia Smith and mixologist Eben Klemm.

- My latest food discovery is... fresh curry leaves.
- I'm currently obsessed with... cooking all kinds of dal.
- If I weren't a photographer, I'd be... a botanist, a lawyer, a poet, or a holistic health doctor.



UK-based chef, cooking instructor, and author Sophie Grigson ("Classic Beef Wellington," page 54) has written 21 cookbooks and hosted several

television programs, including the award-winning Grow Your Greens, Eat Your Greens. Her latest cookbook is The Vegetable Bible. Her mother, Jane Grigson, was a legendary figure in British cooking.

- My latest kitchen purchase was... an Indian-made cake tin with intricate patterns stamped into the metal.
- The last thing I cooked was... baked apples with muscovado sugar.
- I'm currently obsessed with... vanilla it's the only edible orchid, with an extraordinary history.



Former Fine Cooking executive editor Sarah Jay ("Japanese Chef's Knives," page 42) is the author of Knives Cooks Love, a guide to buying, using,

and sharpening knives. She's also the proprietor of paellapans.com, an online store that sells ingredients and equipment for making authentic paella at home.

- The strangest thing I've ever eaten was... a lamb's eyeball in southern Spain.
- My favorite food memory is... meeting my culinary icon, Lulu Peyraud, in France. We made an incredible bouillabaisse together.
- My biggest food-related pet peeve is... when people say a dull knife is more dangerous than a sharp one. Not true!

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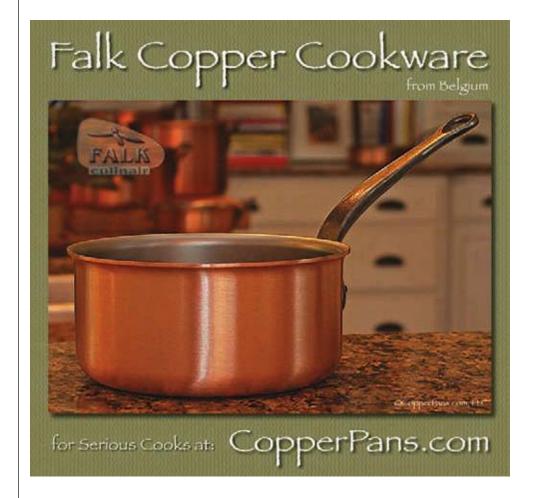
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### What it is

Part of the legume family, the jícama plant is a vine that can grow 20 feet or longer. It's typically found in frost-free regions and is native to Mexico and Central and South America. The plant's edible tuberous roots (also known as Mexican potatoes or yam beans) weigh between 4 ounces and 6 pounds and are turnip-shaped, with thin skin that requires peeling. Jícama's ivory-colored flesh is a good source of vitamin C and potassium.

### How to buy and store it

Jícama is available year-round, though its peak season is between November and June (when its growing regions are at their warmest). Look for it in most supermarkets and in Latin American grocery stores. Choose firm roots that seem heavy for their size; blemishes, wrinkled skin, or dark spots may indicate overripeness. Store whole jícama in the refrigerator for up to one month; wrap cut jícama in plastic and refrigerate for up to one week.

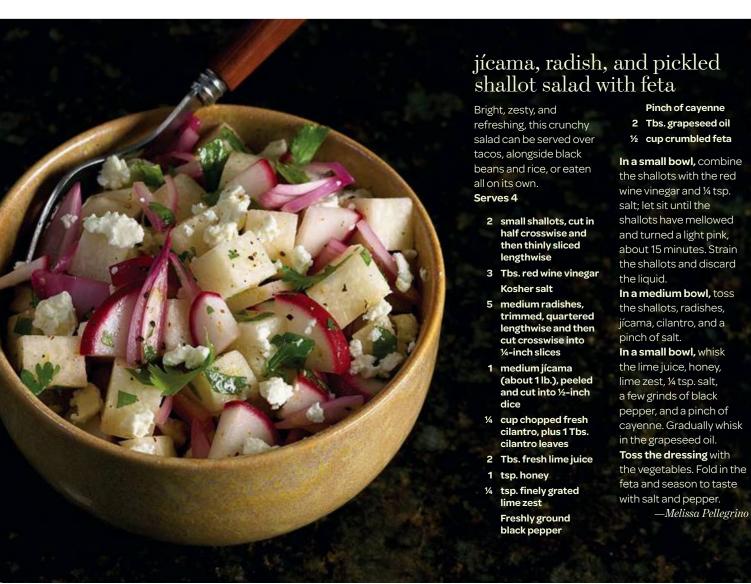
### How to use it

Remove jícama's thin, fibrous peel with a vegetable peeler or paring knife, as you would for a potato. Peeled jícama can be sliced, diced, julienned, or shredded and prepared many ways. In Mexico, it's commonly served

raw with a squeeze of lime, a sprinkle of salt, and a touch of chili powder for a snack. Uncooked, it adds crunch to salads (see the recipe below), condiments, and slaws; cut into large sticks, it can be dunked in guacamole and other dips. Try it sautéed with chicken or shrimp, add it to savory stews, or glaze and broil it. Jícama can also be baked, boiled, steamed, and fried. It pairs well with fresh flavors like cilantro, ginger, lemon, and -Melissa Denchak lime.



Get information on hundreds of ingredients at FineCooking.com/ingredients.



Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Samantha Seneviratne

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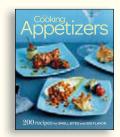
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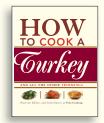
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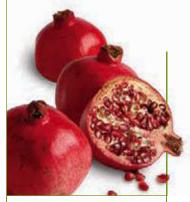
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### AT THE MARKET

## What we're cooking now

Fine Cooking editors (and a reader) share some delicious ideas for in-season ingredients.



### Pomegranate Pan Sauce for Roast Chicken

Roast a chicken and remove from the pan. Add pomegranate juice to the pan drippings, reduce, and add butter and a bit of pomegranate molasses. Cook until heated through. Slice the chicken and serve drizzled with the sauce and garnished with chopped fresh mint and pomegranate seeds.

—Sarah Breckenridge



### Winter Squash and Sage Risotto

Make a basic risotto with shallots, white wine, and chicken broth, adding finely diced squash (try butternut, delicata, or acorn) along with the rice. Five minutes before the rice and squash are done, add some chopped fresh sage. Stir in freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano and crisped pancetta.

—Jennifer Armentrout



### Warm Cabbage Slaw with Pecans

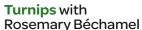
Shred half a head of Savoy cabbage in a food processor and set aside. Sauté a clove of minced garlic in olive oil until fragrant. Meanwhile, combine ¼ cup white vinegar, ¼ cup apple juice, and 1 Tbs. honey. Add the vinegar-apple juice mixture to the garlic and bring to a boil. Pour the mixture over the cabbage, mix well, and toss with a handful of toasted pecans. -Lisa Waddle

### **Braised Collard Greens** with Ham

Sauté cubes of ham until golden; transfer to a plate. In the same pan. cook chopped onion, sliced garlic, and a pinch of red pepper flakes until tender. Add stemmed and chopped collard greens, toss until wilted, add enough chicken broth to barely cover, and season. Simmer, covered, until the greens are tender, about 30 minutes. Add the ham, drizzle with red wine vinegar, and heat through. —Denise Mickelsen



Toss cauliflower florets with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast until golden. In a food processor, blend pitted Kalamata olives, lemon zest, flat-leaf parsley, garlic, salt, black pepper, and enough olive oil to make a loose paste. Toss the cauliflower with the olive paste and shaved Pecorino Romano. -Evan Barbour



Boil diced turnips in well-salted water until tender; drain. Make a béchamel sauce (see FineCook ing.com/extras) infused with rosemary and spoon it over the turnips. Garnish with crumbled bacon. -Melissa Denchak







### ONE READER'S SEASONAL SPECIALTY



### **Cranberry**-Cinnamon Compote

Combine 1 cup fresh cranberries with ½ cup sugar, a cinnamon stick, and enough water to cover; simmer until the cranberries have burst. Remove the cinnamon stick and serve warm over vanilla ice cream with a splash of pomegranate liqueur. —Andie Reid, Wilmington, North Carolina

except bottom left, johnpayı





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### PRESERVING THE SEASON

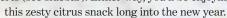
## Citrus

Capture the flavor of your favorite citrus in a candied snack that's deliciously simple to make.

### BY ANITA CHU

'TIS THE SEASON FOR CITRUS. Although many grocery stores tout the brightly colored fruit year-round, the best time for sweet, flavorful lemons, oranges, grapefruit, and tangerines is now. In fact, some varieties—such as blood oranges and Meyer lemons—can *only* be found now, making them even more of a treat. This peak season won't last long, though, so eat up and then start thinking about how to preserve all that bright citrus flavor.

One easy way to do just that is to candy the peels: blanch them, simmer them in a simple syrup, and then drain and roll them in granulated sugar. Once they're dry, you'll have slightly chewy peels with a pleasing crunch that can be eaten on their own or added to myriad desserts (see sidebar). Either way, you'll be enjoying





## Using Candied Peel

Candied citrus peels can be a great addition to your favorite desserts and drinks. Here are a few ways to use them.

- Top a lemon meringue pie with candied lemon peels, or a dark chocolate ganache tart with candied mandarin orange peels.
- Mix a handful of finely chopped candied peels into batters for muffins, breads, or cakes.
- Sprinkle chopped candied peels over ice cream or yogurt.
- Garnish citrus-based cocktails with candied peels.
- Mix finely chopped candied peels into streusel toppings for muffins and cakes.

## candied citrus peel

Citrus with thicker peels will produce the best candied results. (Very thin peel—from limes, for example—turns leathery when candied.)
Blanching peels multiple times tames their bitter flavor. You'll

likely have leftover syrup after making this recipe; brush it over cake or use it in cocktails.

Yields about 3 cups; serves 24

3 cups citrus peel (from about 4 large oranges, 2 large grapefruit, 8 lemons, or 5 Minneolas; see below for preparation instructions)

21/2 cups granulated sugar

Using a sharp knife, cut the fruit lengthwise into eighths; then cut off the zest along with a thin layer of the white pith (see Test Kitchen, p. 87). Slice the peels into ¼-inchwide strips. Save the fruit for another use

Put the sliced peels in a 3-quart heavy-duty saucepan and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil over high heat and blanch for 5 minutes. **Drain the peels,** cover with fresh water, bring to a boil, and blanch again for 5 minutes. Repeat once more for a total of three blanchings.

In the same saucepan, combine 1½ cups of the sugar and 1 cup of water; bring to a boil over high heat.

Add the peels and reduce the heat to low. Let the peels simmer very gently—the mixture should be just slightly bubbling—until they begin to look translucent, 45 to 60 minutes. Stir occasionally to ensure that the peels candy evenly and don't burn.

**Drain the peels,** reserving the syrup for another use. Set a rack over a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet. Put the remaining 1 cup of sugar in a bowl. Roll the peels in the sugar, shake them in a sieve to remove any excess, and spread them on the rack; let dry for 5 to 6 hours. Once fully dry, store the candied peels in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month.

Pastry chef Anita Chu is the author of Field Guide to Candy. She has a blog called Dessert First.



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### BIG BUY COOKING

## Yogurt

Making the most of a favorite food find from a warehouse store.

BY SAMANTHA SENEVIRATNE

YOU COULDN'T RESIST THAT DEAL ON PLAIN yogurt at the warehouse store—who doesn't love tart, creamy yogurt topped with fresh fruit and crunchy granola? Well, that's what you thought seven breakfasts ago. Here, we take advantage of plain yogurt's versatility and offer up a few creative ways to use what's left in the refrigerator. Try our holiday-worthy waffles, simple but delicious carrot soup, and juicy yogurt-marinated chicken, and we're certain your surplus will disappear long before that fast-approaching expiration date.



Yogurt gives waffles a rich texture and a slightly tangy flavor, which is complemented here by warm spices. Whipped egg whites folded into the batter ensure light, tender results.

### Yields about 10 waffles

- 9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 11/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves
- 11/2 cups plain full-fat or low-fat yogurt
- 34 cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs, separated
- 3 Tbs. vegetable oil; more for the waffle iron
- 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/2 cup toasted pecans, coarsely chopped

Heat the oven to 200°F and heat a waffle iron, preferably a Belgian waffle iron.
In a small bowl, combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt, nutmeg, and cloves. In a large bowl, combine the yogurt, milk, egg yolks, vegetable oil, and vanilla.

In a medium bowl, with a wire whisk or electric hand mixer, beat the egg whites to soft peaks.

With a spatula, gently fold the dry ingredients into the yogurt mixture until just combined (the batter should be a little lumpy). Fold the whipped egg whites into the batter until just incorporated.

Brush the waffle iron with a little vegetable oil. Working in batches, cook the batter in the waffle iron according to the manufacturer's instructions until crisp and golden. Set the waffles directly on the oven rack to keep warm. Do not stack them.

**Meanwhile,** in a 2-quart saucepan, warm the maple syrup over medium heat. Stir in the pecans and keep warm.

Serve the waffles with the syrup.

### carrot and leek soup with herbed croutons

Adding yogurt to the soup makes it smooth and creamy. If you can't find chervil (a relative of the carrot), use dill instead.

### Serves 6

- 3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 small leeks (light-green and white parts only), sliced
- 2 large cloves garlic, chopped Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cups lower-salt chicken broth
- 2 lb. carrots, sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 3 fresh or 2 dried bay leaves
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 oz. crusty bread, cut into ½-inch cubes (2 cups)
- 11/2 Tbs. chopped fresh chervil
  - 1 cup plain full-fat or low-fat yogurt

**Position a rack** in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

In a 4- to 5-quart saucepan, melt 3 Tbs. of the butter over medium heat. Add the onion, leeks, garlic, ½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper; cook until softened and light golden-brown, about 10 minutes.

Add the broth, carrots, bay leaves, thyme sprigs, and ½ cup water; bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer until the carrots are tender, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, melt the remaining 3 Tbs. butter in a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the bread cubes and chopped chervil and toss to coat evenly. Spread on a rimmed baking sheet, season with salt, and bake until golden, 8 to 10 minutes.

When the vegetables are tender, discard the bay leaves and thyme sprigs. With a regular or a hand blender, purée the soup (work in batches if using a regular blender). Stir in the yogurt. If you prefer a thinner texture, add a little water. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve garnished

with the chervil croutons.

yogurt-marinated roast chicken

Yogurt is mildly acidic so it's a great tenderizer. Marinate chicken in it overnight for moist and flavorful meat.

Serves 4

- 1 4-lb. chicken
- 2 cups plain full-fat or low-fat yogurt
- 3 medium cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 large shallot, chopped
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh dill
- 1 Tbs. cracked black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Put the chicken on a cutting board breast side down. Use poultry shears to cut along both sides of the backbone; remove and discard the backbone. Flip the chicken over and press down gently to break the breastbone and flatten the breast slightly. In a gallon-size resealable plastic bag, combine the yogurt, garlic, shallot, parsley, dill, cracked peppercorns, lemon zest, and 2 tsp. salt. Add the chicken to the bag and turn to coat well. Set in a bowl and refrigerate overnight.

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Remove the chicken from the marinade and put it skin side up on a broiler pan or on a rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet. Season both sides well with salt and pepper. Roast the chicken, uncovered, until an instantread thermometer inserted in the thigh reads 170°F, 45 to 50 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a carving board and loosely tent it with foil; let rest for 10 minutes before carving.

### The Big Buy

What: Plain full-fat or low-fat yogurt. How much: A 64-ounce tub. How to store: Refrigerate yogurt in its original container for up to two weeks, or go by the expiration date.





## MAKE IT TONIGHT

Just 30 minutes to dinner, start to finish

### cavatappi with artichokes and three cheeses

Cavatappi resemble elongated elbow macaroni and are the perfect shape for this rich and creamy dish-the herbs, cheeses, and sliced artichoke hearts cling to the spirals. By using a combination of frozen artichoke hearts and fresh chives and mint, you can produce a fast and flavorful vegetarian meal in no time.

### Serves 4

### Kosher salt

- 1 lemon
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- ½ cup chopped shallot
- 1 9-oz. package frozen artichoke hearts,

- ½ cup mascarpone (4 oz.)
- 1/2 cup mild goat cheese (3 oz.)
- 1/2 cup finely grated Pecorino Romano; more for serving

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. From the lemon, grate 1½ tsp. of zest and squeeze 1 Tbs. of juice; set aside. Heat the butter and oil in a 12-inch. skillet over medium heat until the butter has melted. Add the shallot and cook until just softened, about 3 minutes. Increase the heat to high and add the frozen artichokes,

red pepper flakes, 1/2 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pep-

per. Cook until the artichokes are golden-

brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in 3 Tbs. of the chives, the mint. and the lemon zest.

Meanwhile, cook the cavatappi according to package directions until al dente. Drain, reserving ½ cup of the water. Return the pasta to the pot and stir in the mascarpone, goat cheese, pecorino, lemon juice, and 1/4 cup of the water until smooth. Gently stir in the artichoke mixture and add more water if necessary to moisten the pasta. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with the remaining chives and additional cheese.

—Samantha Seneviratne





## turkey cutlets and black beans with tangerine-habanero mojo sauce

Mojo (pronounced MOE-hoe) is a Caribbean and Latin-American garlic, chile, and citrus sauce that pairs well with meat, poultry, and seafood. Here, it's made with tangerine and lime, so it's both sweet and tart. If habaneros are scarce, try a Scotch bonnet, jalapeño, or serrano chile instead.

### Serves 4

- 5 to 6 Tbs. olive oil
- 3 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1/2 plus 1/8 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ cup fresh tangerine juice (from 2 tangerines)
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice (from 1 lime)
- 1/2 tsp. seeded and minced habanero chile
  - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 15½-oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
- 4 turkey breast cutlets (about 11/4 lb.)

In a 10-inch skillet, heat 2 Tbs. of the oil and the garlic over medium heat until the garlic is golden, about 3 minutes. Stir in ½ tsp. of the cumin. Add the tangerine juice, lime juice, and habanero. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper; set the mojo sauce aside. (The sauce can be served warm or at room temperature.)

Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and ¼ tsp. salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the beans and the remaining ½ tsp. cumin and cook until the beans are heated through, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the cilantro and season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer the beans to a bowl and cover with foil to keep warm.

Wash and dry the skillet. Season the turkey cutlets on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in the skillet over medium-high heat until very hot. Add as many cutlets as will comfortably fit in a single layer and cook until browned on both sides and just cooked through, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate and tent with foil to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining cutlets, adding the remaining 1 Tbs. oil if needed.

**Divide the cutlets** and black beans among individual plates. Spoon the mojo sauce over and serve.

—Dawn Yanagihara

## mushroom salad with lemon, thyme, and parmigiano

Make this delicious yet simple salad just before serving, since the longer the mushrooms marinate, the more liquid they'll release. Pair with roast chicken or broiled steak.

#### Serves 6 as a side dish

- 1 large lemon
- 2 Tbs. minced shallot (about 1 small)
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh thyme
   Pinch freshly grated nutmeg
   Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup plus 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 lb. button mushrooms, cleaned, trimmed, and sliced ¼ inch thick
  Scant ½ cup shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano (use a vegetable peeler)

Finely grate 1 tsp. zest from the lemon and then squeeze 2 Tbs. of juice. In a large serving bowl, mix the zest and juice with the shallot, parsley, thyme, nutmeg, 1½ tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Whisk in the olive oil. Add the mushrooms and stir gently to coat. Let the salad marinate for 10 minutes.

**Just before serving,** stir the mushrooms again, season to taste with salt and pepper, and scatter the Parmigiano on top.

—Jennifer McLagan







### pasta puttanesca

Many of the ingredients for this classic flavorpacked pasta may already be in your pantry, making this a perfect weeknight meal.

### Serves 4

### Kosher salt

- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 3 oil-packed anchovy fillets, finely chopped (scant 1 Tbs.)
- 14 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 1 lb. dried spaghetti
- ½ cup pitted brine-cured black olives, such as Kalamata, coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbs. nonpareil capers, rinsed and drained
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh oregano or marjoram Freshly ground black pepper

**Bring a large pot** of well-salted water to a boil over high heat.

**Meanwhile,** heat 1 Tbs. of the olive oil with the garlic in a 3-quart saucepan over medium

heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until the garlic is sizzling, about 2 minutes. Add the anchovies and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring frequently, until the garlic is very pale golden, 1 to 2 minutes more. Stir in the tomatoes. Increase the heat to medium high, bring to a boil, and then reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is slightly thickened, 8 to 10 minutes.

**After adding the tomatoes** to the pan, add the pasta to the boiling water and cook according to the package directions until al dente.

When the tomato sauce is ready, add the olives, capers, and oregano and stir. Simmer until just heated through, about 2 minutes. Stir in the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil and season the sauce to taste with salt and pepper. When the pasta is ready, reserve ½ cup of the cooking water and drain well. Return the pasta to the pot, set it over medium-low heat, pour in the sauce, and toss, adding cooking water as needed for the sauce to coat the pasta.

—Dawn Yanagihara

Serve immediately.



## cannellini beans with lemon, roasted red peppers, and bacon

Smoky bacon, sweet roasted red pepper, and tangy lemon transform canned beans in this easy side dish. Serve with lamb chops or sausages.

Serves 6 as a side



- 1 medium lemon, scrubbed
- 2 oz. thick bacon (about 2 slices), cut crosswise into thin strips
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
  - 2 15½-oz. cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained

34 cup lower-salt chicken broth

2 jarred roasted red peppers, cut into small dice Freshly ground black pepper Kosher salt

Using a vegetable peeler, shave six 1-inch-wide strips of zest from the lemon (avoid the white pith).
Cut the strips crosswise ¼ inch wide.
Juice half of the lemon and reserve the juice and zest separately.

In a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat, cook the bacon with 1 Tbs. of the oil, stirring

occasionally, until it renders most of its fat and starts to brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a paper-towel-lined plate.

Remove the pan from the heat and add the rosemary, garlic, and red pepper flakes; cook, swirling the contents of the pan, until sizzling steadily and fragrant, about 30 seconds.

Return the pan to medium heat and add the beans, chicken broth, roasted peppers, and lemon zest. Bring to a boil; then reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the broth thickens and the flavors meld, 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in 1 Tbs. of the lemon juice and ½ tsp. pepper.

Season to taste with more lemon juice or salt. Serve drizzled with the remaining 1 Tbs. oil and sprinkled with the bacon.

—Tony Rosenfeld



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- 1 tbsp. Cabernet Sauvignon <u>or</u> other red wine
- 1 tsp. Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 eggs 1 egg yolk
- 6 tbsp. flour
- 1/4 tsp. Saigon Cinnamon or Roasted Saigon Cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. Ground Ginger
- 1/8 tsp. **Ground Cloves** (optional)

MICROWAVE chocolate and butter in large microwavable bowl on HIGH 1 minute or until butter is melted. Stir with wire whisk until chocolate is completely melted. Stir in wine, vanilla and sugar until well blended. Stir in eggs and yolk. Stir in flour and spices. Pour batter evenly into 4 (6-ounce) buttered custard cups or soufflé dishes. Place on baking sheet.

**BAKE** in preheated 425°F oven 13 to 15 minutes or until sides are firm but centers are soft. Let stand 1 minute. Carefully loosen edges with knife. Invert onto serving plates. Sprinkle with additional confectioners' sugar. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

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### seared scallops with cauliflower, brown butter, and basil

In this easily assembled meal, vermouthlaced brown butter imbues cauliflower with deep flavor, while a basil garnish adds color and freshness.

### Serves 4

- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small head cauliflower (1 lb.), trimmed and cut into bite-size florets (about 4 cups)
- 1 lb. all-natural (dry-packed) sea scallops
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 large shallot, minced
- ½ cup dry vermouth Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 large fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced

Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Add the cauliflower and cook, stirring often, until lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.

Add the remaining 2 Tbs. oil to the skillet. When shimmering hot,

add the scallops in a single layer. Cook until golden-brown, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook until the scallops are barely cooked through, about 2 minutes more (if you cut into one, it should still be slightly translucent in the center). Transfer to another bowl.

Swirl the butter into the skillet, add the shallot and cook, stirring often, until the shallot softens and the butter begins to brown, about 1 minute.

Add the vermouth and bring it to a boil, scraping up any bits on the bottom of the skillet with a wooden spoon. Return the cauliflower to the skillet and season with 1/4 tsp. each salt and pepper. Cover the skillet and reduce the heat to medium. Cook, stirring once or twice, until the cauliflower florets are tender, about 6 minutes.

Return the scallops to the pan and toss to heat through, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat, sprinkle with the basil, and serve.

> -Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough



## Make a cracker smile.





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## pan-seared chicken thighs with beer and grainy mustard sauce

Maple syrup adds a hint of sweetness that rounds out the mustard's bite in this quick pan sauce. Not in the mood for chicken? Try it with pork chops instead.

#### Serves 4

- 8 small bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (4 to 5 oz. each), trimmed of excess skin and fat Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. vegetable oil
- 2 medium shallots, minced
- 11/2 tsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 cup amber lager, such as Dos Equis Ambar
- 1/2 cup lower-salt chicken broth
- 1½ Tbs. pure maple syrup
- tsp. chopped fresh thyme; more for garnish
- 1 Tbs. whole-grain mustard
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter

Position a rack in the lower third of the oven, set a large rimmed baking sheet on the rack, and heat the oven to 475°F. Season the chicken thighs all over with salt and pepper.

Heat the oil in a heavy-duty ovenproof 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Swirl to coat the pan bottom. Arrange the chicken in the pan skin side down in a single layer (it will likely be a snug fit), cover with an ovenproof splatter screen (if you have one) and cook until the skin is deep golden-brown, about 7 minutes. Turn the thighs and transfer the skillet and splatter screen, if using, to the oven. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a thigh

Pour off all but 1 Tbs. fat from the skillet. Add the shallots and sauté over medium heat until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in the flour until combined. Stir in the

registers 170°F, 5 to 8 min-

utes. Transfer to a plate.

beer, chicken broth, maple syrup, and thyme. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil, scraping up any browned bits from the skillet with a wooden spoon. Simmer vigorously until reduced to about 1 cup, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk in the mustard, then the butter. Season the sauce to taste with salt and pepper. To serve, dip each chicken thigh in the sauce and turn to coat. Arrange 2 thighs on each of 4 plates, spoon additional sauce over them, and garnish with the thyme. Serve immediately.

—Dawn Yanagihara





## pistachio-crusted lamb chops

Serve the lamb chops with lentils and rice and plain Greek yogurt mixed with chopped mint.

### Serves 4 to 6

- 1 cup unsalted shelled pistachios Kosher salt
- 3 Tbs. honey
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 14 tsp. cayenne Freshly ground black pepper
- 12 lamb rib chops (about 11/2 lb.)
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

Position a rack about 4 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler on high.

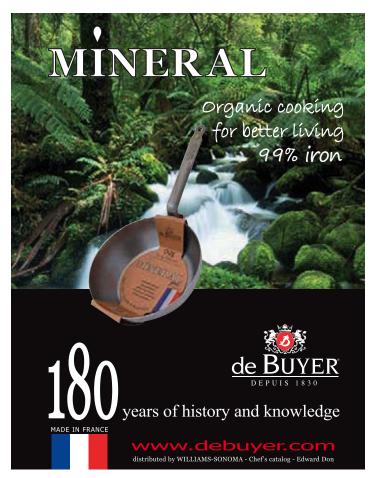
Finely chop the pistachios in a food processor. Combine the pistachios and ½ tsp. salt in a small bowl. In another small bowl, use a fork to mix the honey and lemon juice. In a third small bowl, mix the cumin, cayenne, 1 tsp. salt, and 1/2 tsp. pepper.

Brush the lamb chops with the oil and season on both sides with the spice mixture.

Arrange the chops on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Broil until lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip and broil until the second sides are lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven, and lower the rack to about 6 inches from the broiler. Using a pastry brush, spread about half of the honey mixture on the top sides of the chops. Sprinkle with about half of the nuts, pressing so that they adhere. Broil until the nuts are lightly toasted, about 30 seconds.

Flip the chops and repeat the honey-nut coating on the other sides. Broil until the nuts are lightly browned and the lamb is medium rare, about 30 seconds. Let the chops rest for about 2 minutes, and then serve, sprinkling any nuts that may have fallen off the lamb onto each portion. -Dina Cheney

















## The Reading List

New must-have reads for food lovers. BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

### Chewy Gooey Crispy Crunchy Melt-in-Your-Mouth Cookies

By Alice Medrich

### (Artisan, \$25.95)

Cookie lovers of every stripe will find much to love in baking icon Alice Medrich's new book. Whether you like them crispy, chewy, crunchy, or gooey, you'll find the cookie you're craving in this collection of recipes, organized by texture. Medrich tweaks all the beloved classics to perfection-from brownies and blondies to shortbread and snickerdoodlesand then offers compelling flavor variations, ensuring that both the cookie purist and the iconoclast are satisfied.

### James Beard's American Cookery

By James Beard

### (Little, Brown and Company, \$35)

Venerated food writer James Beard wrote more than 20 books over the course of his life, but this is the one that no self-respecting cook should be without: It's the best of Beard. This new edition includes the text and color illustrations of the original (published in 1972) as well as a foreword by acclaimed chef Tom Colicchio. A celebration of America's regional cuisines, the book brims with culinary history, Beard's no-nonsense advice, and 1,500 recipes for everything from cocktail food to candy.

### Avec Eric A Culinary Journey with Eric Ripert Featuring over 100 Simple Recipes

By Eric Ripert (Wiley, \$34.95)

Based on the Emmy Award-winning public television show that documents chef Eric

Ripert's experiences traveling and cooking for family and friends, Avec Eric is for cooks who are curious about recipe development. Ripert reveals how his adventures spark his imagination and shares notes from his travels, personal photos, and 100-plus recipes that are both brilliant and approachable. The book moves with ease from simple comforts like Cornmeal Biscuits to more adventurous dishes like Whole Roasted Red Snapper with Thai Spices and Coconut Milk, covering the culinary landscapes of Tuscany, the Hudson Valley, and more along the way.

### My Sweet Mexico

Recipes for Authentic Pastries, Breads, Candies, Beverages, and Frozen Treats

By Fany Gerson

### (Ten Speed Press, \$30)

This transporting book documents pastry chef Fany Gerson's quest for the recipes of her homeland's traditional dulces. She visits artisans, shops, museums, libraries, and markets across Mexico and talks to acquaintances and strangers alike to learn the secrets of authentic Chocolate-Corn Porridge, Cream Cheese Morning Rolls, and Tres Leches Cake, among others. It's a deliciously well-researched journey through the sweet side of Mexico.

### Thai Street Food **Authentic Recipes, Vibrant Traditions**

By David Thompson

### (Ten Speed Press, \$60)

Renowned Australian chef and Thai-food expert David Thompson offers a hungerinspiring tour of the outdoor markets and food stalls of Thailand. The evocative photos and recipes for noodles, curries, satays, salads, roasted meats, and more capture the

daily rhythms, bright flavors, and bustling spirit of Bangkok's streets, and will appeal to anyone with a love for Thai cuisine.

Kimberly Y. Masibay is a Fine Cooking *contributing editor*.

## Story Time

Wine buffs and young cooks will relish these stories from two big names in wine and food.

### Reading Between the Wines By Terry Theise

(University of California Press, \$24.95)

In this inspiring and superbly written book, acclaimed importer Terry Theise muses on what constitutes beauty in wine and how best to appreciate it. Wine connoisseurs will savor his enthusiasm for answering the question, Why does wine matter?

### Nonna Tell Me a Story: Lidia's Christmas Kitchen

By Lidia Bastianich; illustrated by Laura Logan (Running Press Kids, \$15.95)

With this children's picture book, famed chef Lidia Bastianich reminisces on

childhood Christmases spent in Istria, a peninsula in the Adriatic Sea. She invites readers to participate in the simple

delights of her family's holiday traditions with festive recipes and treetrimming tips.





Find recipes from these cookbooks and many more at FineCooking.com/extras.

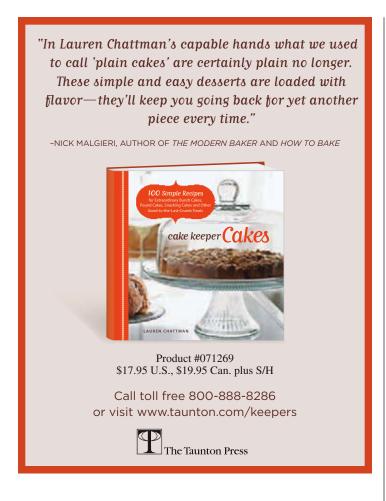
## Discover a New World with Heirloom Grains

They say history always repeats itself, and with the selection of heirloom grains from Bob's Red Mill, you'll understand why. Bob's Red Mill has explored history and traveled the world for heirloom grains to excite your palate. From the pyramids of Egypt to the Incan ruins of South America, these unique grains have been renowned for centuries for their distinct flavors. Discover the secrets of ancient cultures and try Bob's Red Mill heirloom grains today.

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## Great Finds

Special edition: food gifts for one and all. BY MELISSA DENCHAK



### **Goat's Milk Caramels**

Handmade in small batches with milk from free-range goats, Happy Goat's caramels are tangy, chewy, and far from ordinary. \$9.99 for 14 pieces at happygoatcaramel.com.

HANDMADE CARAMELS

### **Truffled Popcorn**

479° Popcorn's black truffle Pop It Yourself kit comes with heirloom popcorn, La Tourangelle black truffle oil, and truffle-infused sea salt. Popped, drizzled, and salted, the popcorn has a delicate, earthy flavor. \$45 for a kit at 479popcorn.com; 888-479-9866.



### Salt-Preserved Limes

Robert Lambert's salty-sour Rangpur limes (think tart mandarin oranges) are cured with juniper berry, bay leaf, rosemary, and lavender before they're preserved in salt. They're delicious in marinades, braises, or roasts, \$12 for an 8-ounce jar at robertlambert.com; 415-256-8110.

### **Boozy Dark Chocolate**

Nina Wanat, the founder of San Francisco-based BonBonBar, uses top-shelf single malt Scotch, bourbon, and dark rum in her handmade confections. The bourbon bar (above) has sweet, raisiny notes.

Three bars for \$15 at bonbonbar .com; 415-938-7545.



Sarivole Organic Bakery's baked-to-order cookies-in flavors like peanut butter oatmeal and chocolate coconut almondarrive fresh, chewy, and delicious. Even their gluten-free options will have you swooning.

\$15 for a package of six at sarivole.com; 718-683-4057.



### **Wine Preserves**

The Cherry Shiraz preserves from Tishbi Winery (a family-owned estate in Israel) have big pieces of sweet-tart cherries and pleasant, lingering notes of red wine. \$8.95 for a 7.7-ounce jar at fruit oftheland.com.



### **Vermont Maple Syrup**

Dragonfly Sugarworks offers four grades of organic maple syrup, from a dark, gutsy Grade B to an ambercolored, more delicate grade called Vermont Fancy (above). \$15 for a 16.9-ounce bottle at dragonflysugarworks .com; 802-434-6502.



warmth of Spanish pimentón (smoked paprika). \$64 for a 2-pound wheel at threeringfarm.com; 541-444-1362.



### **Cherrywood-Smoked Bacon**

Smoked over fresh-cut cherrywood logs for a full day, Nueske's new all-natural cherrywood-smoked bacon is complete porcine bliss. 1½ pounds for \$19.95 at nueskes .com; 800-392-2266.



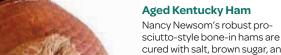
### Venison Pâté

Served with a crusty French baguette, Les Trois Petits Cochons' decadent and savory cranberry-and-pistachio-filled venison pâté will be the hit of any hors d'oeuvres table. \$14.99 per pound at murrayscheese.com; 888-692-4339.



### **Artisanal Rum**

With a rich, butterscotch flavor, Berkshire Mountain Distiller's rum has a dryness that's pure pleasure in a glass. It's handcrafted in small batches, aged in oak barrels, and full of warm vanilla notes. About \$30: see berkshiremountain distillers.com for where to buy; 413-229-0219.



cured with salt, brown sugar, and hickory smoke, and then aged for 12 months. If you prefer the more intense flavor of longer-aged ham, ask her to age yours for up to 21 months. From \$12.95 per pound at newsomscountryham .com; 270-365-2482.



### **Italian Olive Oil**

By adopting one of Nudo's olive trees in the Abruzzo or Le Marche regions of Italy, you'll receive the harvest from it (and its neighbors) over the course of one year, including a tin of olive oil from the first cold press and flavored oils like zesty mandarin and spicy chili. \$109 at nudo-italia.com; 718-473-0732.



## A First Taste of Christmas

There was no fragrant tree, no goose, no plum pudding. But the pâté? Divine. BY MELISSA CLARK

GROWING UP IN A JEWISH FAMILY IN BROOKLYN, I put on a tough who-needs-Christmas-when-I've-got-eight-days-of-Hanukkah façade. But the truth was, I felt left out. I saw myself as a modern-day little match girl, excluded from the holiday coziness of fragrant fir trees, burnished roast goose, and holly-strewn plum puddings. I wanted in, but didn't want to admit it.

I was in college by the time I got invited to a traditional Christmas dinner. When the invitation came, I jumped on it, despite the fact that the hostess (the mother of my then boyfriend, Peter) was a staunch vegetarian. The odds for roast goose were absolutely nil.

No matter. On Christmas Eve, Peter and I knocked on her door.

His mother, Anna, wrapped in a cranberry silk kimono, her black hair cut into a severe bob, gave us exuberant hugs. Beautiful and with stick straight posture, she was precisely as I'd pictured from Peter's stories. Born to Russian aristocracy who fled during the revolution, Anna's family made their way across Asia lugging what they could of their heirloom silver before eventually settling in Europe so Anna could study classical ballet. From there, she came to the United States, where she danced, married, bore children, divorced, became a dance therapist, strict vegetarian, and a macramé enthusiast. Cooking was not on her list of accomplishments.

After hanging up our coats, Anna bade me follow her into the kitchen, where a plasticwrapped turkey lay on the counter. Although Anna hadn't touched meat in decades (Peter was brought up vegetarian), she wanted to make sure I would have a proper first Christmas. She unwrapped the bird and put it in a roasting pan where it sat rigid and still-frozen.

"It will thaw in the oven!" she said with a dramatic wave of her arm.

I was too young and meek to intervene, so I just smiled and accepted a glass of hot tea set in an antique silver filigree holder that I imagined had made the trek through Asia in a fraying leather trunk.

For the next few hours, I helped Anna in the kitchen, chopping vegetables for her curried seitan and brown rice pilaf. She regaled me with stories about her childhood and with what seemed like too much information about her failed marriage. As the sky darkened, we swapped tea for brandy-laced eggnog and gossiped like school friends about the characters in our favorite 19th century novels.

At one point, I opened the oven to peek at the turkey. It was sitting in a puddle, sadly steaming. Watching Anna breezily dump half the contents of many dusty spice jars into the pots on the stove, I didn't have high hopes for the rest of the meal, either.

But I didn't care. The company and eggnog were delightful, and so was her house, filled with Peter's paintings, Russian knickknacks, and a prodigious collection of macramé ornaments decorating a small tinsel tree, because, as Anna told me, "I don't believe in murdering innocent trees for our own amusement."

"Anna gaily carved the sodden, half-cooked turkey, seeming not to notice that the interior was neon pink."

At around 6 pm, Anna's neighbors came by bearing Chardonnay; Peter made a fire. My stomach growled fiercely. Peter and I arranged the platters of seitan, pilaf, and salad, while Anna gaily carved the sodden, half-cooked turkey, seeming not to notice that the interior was neon pink.

I couldn't bring myself to say anything to this charming lady, who played Chopin waltzes on the piano and encouraged her guests to dance. I was so taken that when she offered me a dubious brown lump of something sitting atop lettuce leaves, I helped myself to a heaping spoonful, despite my better judgment.

Now, the turkey may have been inedible, and the seitan and brown rice an unappetizing hippy cliché. But the brown lump, which turned out to be her special recipe for mushroom-walnut pâté, lifted from



some out-of-print vegetarian cookbook, was utterly divine. Flecked with sweet caramelized onions, it was meaty and savory, with an earthiness from mushrooms, richness from toasted nuts, and creaminess from hardcooked eggs. I spread it thickly on slices of bread and asked for the recipe, earning me Anna's warm smile.

There was no fragrant tree, no goose, no plum pudding (dessert was a mail-ordered chocolate mousse cake, and I ate two servings.) But it was as perfect a first Christmas as any Jewish girl from Brooklyn could have hoped for.

I haven't kept in touch with either Peter or his mom, but I think of them whenever I make Anna's recipe, which I sometimes serve at Hanukkah. I call it vegetarian chopped liver.

It tastes great on latkes, too.





# vegetarian chopped liver

This rich mushroom-walnut pâté is especially good with pumpernickel or rye bread.

#### Yields about 2 cups

- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 1 large yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced into half moons
- 2 fresh thyme sprigs
- 3/4 lb. cremini (baby bella) mushrooms, cut into medium dice (41/2 cups)
- 1/2 lb. shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, caps cut into medium dice (2 cups) Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. dry sherry
- 1 cup walnuts, toasted
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp. fresh lemon juice; more to taste

- 1/4 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and roughly chopped Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling Flaky sea salt, for garnish Thinly sliced scallion greens or chives, for garnish

Melt the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and thyme and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is dark brown, 15 to 20 minutes-it should be darker than golden, but not black. Stir in the cremini and shiitake, ½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms are soft and golden and the liquid they release has evaporated, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the sherry and cook, scraping up the browned bits from the pan, until almost evaporated, about 1 minute. Let the mixture cool to room temperature.

Transfer half of the mushroom mixture to a food processor. Add the walnuts, garlic, lemon juice, zest, ¾ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper. Process until smooth, stopping occasionally to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the remaining mushroom mixture and the eggs. Pulse until coarsely chopped. Season to taste with more salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Serve in a crock or bowl or mounded on a platter, drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with flaky sea salt and scallion greens or chives.

Melissa Clark's latest book is In the Kitchen with a Good Appetite.

# Fruitcake

Try the real thing (rum-soaked fruit!) and there's no going back. BY NICOLE REES

ALTHOUGH IT'S RICH IN HISTORY, holds a permanent spot in many family recipe boxes, and is often used as a wedding cake in England, fruitcake is a muchmaligned confection in the United States. That's unfortunate, because a rich cake made with liquor-soaked fruit certainly sounds delicious. And as we've come to learn, it absolutely is.

Fruitcake varieties abound, but most fall into one of two categories: the more traditional dark, made with molasses or brown sugar and heavy on spice, or the light-colored golden fruitcake, which includes ingredients like almonds and honey (see the box opposite). The classic dark version is featured here and is so delectable you'll be loath to give it away.



Use dried fruit Fruitcake is only as good as its fruit. Instead of using super-sweet, artificial-tasting candied fruit, experiment with your favorite dried varieties: apricots, figs, cherries, and cranberries all work. But be sure to presoak the fruit you use-it will up the flavor and add moisture to your cake.

Mix your batter thoroughly Since traditional fruitcake recipes don't include baking powder or baking soda, volume depends on thorough mixing. Adding a couple tablespoons of flour to the batter before beating in the rest helps emulsify and aerate the batter.

Keep the temperature low Due to its dense nature, fruitcake is best baked at a low temperature for a longer time-about an hour and a half for an 81/2x41/2-inch loaf pan.

Baste your cake Use the rum that remains after soaking the fruit to baste your cooled cake. It makes it extra moist and flavorful and helps preserve the cake. If you plan to keep your fruitcake for longer than a week, baste it each week thereafter with a tablespoon or two of fresh rum.

#### **Tool Kit**

Have these kitchen essentials on hand before you start the recipe:

- Liquid measuring cup
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Rasp-style grater
- 2-quart saucepan with lid
- 81/2x41/2-inch metal loaf pan Whisk
- Medium bowl
- Stand mixer with a paddle attachment (or an electric hand mixer)
- - Rubber spatula
  - Cooling rack
  - Pastry brush



Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Samantha Senev



- 3 large eggs, at room temperature
- ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 14 tsp. table salt
- 3½ oz. crystallized ginger, finely chopped (1/2 cup)

Dark rum, as needed for brushing

#### **SOAK THE FRUIT**

Put the rum, dried fruit, and orange zest in 2-quart saucepan, cover, and warm over medium heat until hot, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool. Refrigerate for a minimum of 24 hours and up to 3 days. Before making the cake, bring the fruit to room temperature and drain, reserving any liquid for basting. (If the fruit was very dry, it may have absorbed all the liquid.)

#### MAKE THE CAKE

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F. Butter an 81/2x41/2-inch metal loaf pan. Line the pan with two strips of parchment in opposite directions, leaving an overhang for easy removal of the cake.

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour with the cinnamon, allspice, cardamom, nutmeg, and cloves. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle

attachment (or in a large bowl with an electric hand mixer), beat the butter and both sugars on medium-high speed until fluffy and no lumps of brown sugar remain, 1 to 2 minutes, stopping to scrape the bowl as needed. Beat in the eggs one at a time, scraping the bowl and mixing for 30 to 60 seconds after each addition. Beat in the vanilla and salt. Add 2 Tbs. of the flour mixture to the bowl and beat briefly. Reserve 2 Tbs. of the flour mixture and add the rest to the batter; beat on low speed for 10 seconds to incorporate the flour and then on medium-high for 1 minute. Combine the crystallized ginger with the drained fruit. Scrape the batter into the center of the bowl. Put the marinated fruit on top of the batter and then sprinkle the reserved flour evenly over the fruit. Using a rubber spatula, fold the fruit into the batter until it's evenly distributed. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, pressing it in to eliminate air pockets and smoothing the top to make it level. Bake for 15 minutes and then reduce the temperature to 300°F and bake until the center of the cake has risen slightly and a cake tester inserted in the middle comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs, about 11/2 hours.

Remove the cake and let it cool in its pan on a wire rack for 20 to 30 minutes. Use the parchment overhang to lift the cake from the pan. Place it on the rack, peel down the parchment sides, and cool completely. When cool, brush the cake with 2 to 3 Tbs. of the reserved fruitsoaking liquid or fresh rum. Wrap tightly in plastic and then in foil; store the cake at room temperature for a minimum of 48 hours before serving.

If serving within a week of baking, you do not need to baste the cake again. For longer storage, baste once a week with 1 to 2 tablespoons of rum and wrap in fresh plastic and foil. The cake will keep at room temperature for at least 3 weeks.

Nicole Rees is a food scientist and professional baker who lives in Portland, Oregon.



Cherry-Almond-Fig Fruitcake Dark fruitcake may be more traditional, but our golden version-made with Amaretto- and Cognac-soaked dried figs and tart cherries—is a decadent and gorgeous alternative. Find the recipe at FineCooking.com/extras.



# Skinny Dipping

Spruce up your party platter with these delicious, good-for-you dips. BY ELLIE KRIEGER



"In these dips, avocados, beans, and red peppers take center stage."

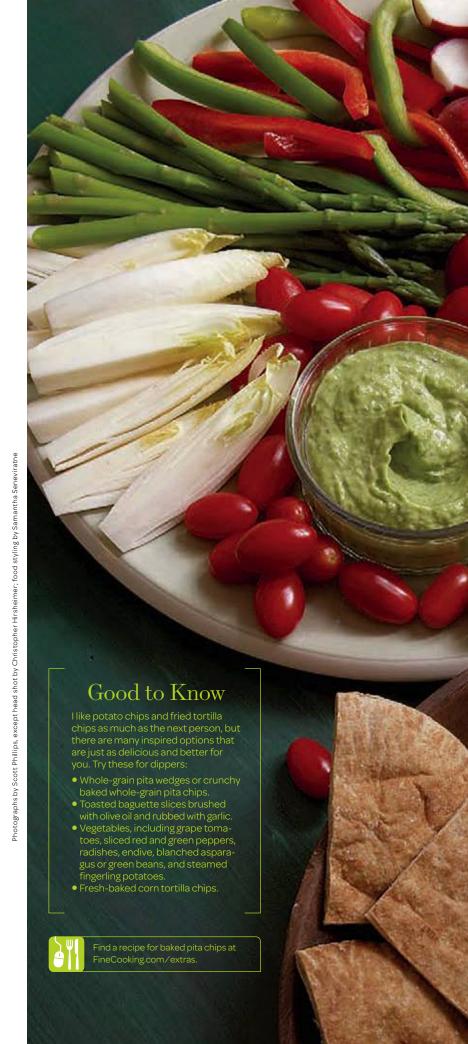
DURING MY TRAVELS, I've picked up dip ideas and recipes as varied as the stamps on my passport. In Morocco, I tasted how richly flavored hummus can be. In Greece, I discovered creamy, garlicky tzatziki. In Mexico, I sampled dozens of flavorful salsas. Besides being intriguing and delicious, these dips-and others from the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Central America—are much better for you than the sour cream and cream cheese dips typically found on the party circuit here. That's because they use healthful vegetables, beans, nuts, and seeds as their base ingredients.

From the global perspective, hummus and guacamole are the most common examples, but

there are worlds to explore beyond those. Smoky roasted eggplant and tahini (sesame paste) make baba ghanoush, and sweet roasted red peppers and almonds form a classic romesco. There are as many varieties of bean dip as there are national flags.

These global dips not only contain less saturated fat than those made with sour cream or cream cheese, but their vegetables, nuts, beans, and seeds add lots of nutrients: for example, vitamins C and A in red peppers and tomatoes; healthy fat in avocado, nuts, and seeds; and protein, minerals, and B vitamins in beans. What's more, all of these ingredients are rich in fiber and antioxidants.

In these dip recipes, avocados, beans, and red peppers take center stage. The Green Goddess Dip uses avocado as a foundation for fresh herbs and has just the right amount of vinegar and buttermilk. Beans provide creaminess in the Chipotle Black Bean Dip, which has a smoky, spicy kick. And in the Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip, charred peppers make a velvety base for Mediterranean flavors. Together, they make a deliciously healthy party platter.





# roasted red pepper and feta dip

Yields about 2 cups; serves 8

- 3 medium red bell peppers
- 1 medium clove garlic Fine sea salt
- ½ cup crumbled feta (about 3 oz.)
- 2 Tbs. plain dry breadcrumbs
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh dill

**Position a rack** 5 to 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high. Put the peppers on a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet and broil, turning every 5 minutes, until the skin is charred all around and the peppers have softened, about 20 minutes. Put the peppers in a large bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let sit until cool enough to handle. Remove the skins, seeds, and stems.

Peel and mince the garlic clove.

With the side of a chef's knife, mash the garlic and ¼ tsp. salt together to form a paste.

**Put the peppers,** feta, breadcrumbs, lemon juice, and olive oil in a food processor and process until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the garlic paste and dill. Season to taste with salt and serve.

# chipotle black bean dip

Yields about 1½ cups; serves 6

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- ½ medium yellow onion, diced (½ cup)
- 1 medium clove garlic, minced
- 14 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/8 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 15½-oz. can black beans (preferably low-sodium), drained and rinsed
- 2 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh cilantro; more for garnish
- 1½ Tbs. fresh lime juice
- tsp. seeded, minced chipotle chile (from a can of chipotles in adobo; see Test Kitchen, p. 87)
   Fine sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a medium skillet over medium heat.
Add the onion and cook until softened, about 3 minutes.
Stir in the garlic, cumin, and coriander and cook for 30 seconds more.
Set aside to cool slightly.
Put the onion mixture,

beans, cilantro, lime juice, chipotle, ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper, the remaining 1 Tbs. oil, and 1 Tbs. water in a food processor. Process until smooth. Transfer to a serving bowl, garnish with more chopped cilantro, and serve.

# avocado green goddess dip

Yields about 1½ cups; serves 6

- medium ripe avocado, pitted and peeled
- 2 scallions (both green and white parts), thinly sliced
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 14 cup fresh tarragon
- 1/4 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 Tbs. sliced fresh chives
- 2 Tbs. white wine vinegar

Fine sea salt and freshly ground white pepper

Put all of the ingredients in a

food processor and process until smooth. Transfer to a bowl, season to taste with salt and pepper, and serve.

Registered dietitian Ellie Krieger is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.

# Make ahead

All of these dips can be made up to three days ahead and refrigerated in an airtight container.

# Japanese Chef's Knives

In the market for a new chef's knife? These are our five new favorites. BY SARAH JAY

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME to upgrade to someone who loves to cook. The marketplace has exploded with an array of high-performing (and gorgeouslooking) knives, some of the most innovative coming from Japan. Japanese chef's knives (called gyuto knives) tend to be lighter, thinner, and notably sharper than their European counterparts—qualities that explain why they're becoming the next big thing. Unlike santoku knives, which have a shorter, snub-nose shape, these knives have a more typical chef's knife profile, with a longer blade and a pointed tip.

A knife is like a pair of jeans: Every cook will prefer his or her own style and fit. Each of these options has something unique to recommend it, so you're sure to find the right one for you (or the cook you're shopping for).

# Anatomy of a Japanese chef's knife

What makes a Japanese chef's knife different from a European-style knife? Here are a few distinctions between the two:

Spine This is the top edge of the blade (opposite the cutting edge). Spines tend to be narrower on Japanese knives than on European knives and may

**Heel** The heel is the bottom corner of the blade that's closest to the handle. It's usually pointed and sharp on Japanese knives, allowing the blade's cutting edge to knives, it's typically thicker and blunt.

Bolster This is the section of blade between the heel and the handle. Most European chef's knives have a thick wedge of steel for a bolster; the bolster on Japanese knives is very thin, making for a lighter knife.

 $\begin{tabular}{ll} \textbf{Cutting edge} & The smaller the angle along the cutting edge, the sharper the knife. The angle of the blade \\ \end{tabular}$ edge tends to be narrower on Japanese knives than sharper edge.

### FOR THE NOVICE Dojo 7½-inch gyuto knife

\$100 at justknives101.com

Weight: 4% oz. Blade dimensi

e dimensions: 7% x 1% inches

This knife powered its way through our tests, receiving praise for its light weight and compact size; its short blade will put even the most diffident cooks at ease. The super sharp blade is made of both carbon steel and stainless steel and is rust resistant. It has a no-frills handle that may not match the quality of the blade, but it's a small price to pay for a great knife.

#### FOR THE BARGAIN HUNTER

# Fujiwara FKM 210 mm gyuto knife

\$75 at chefknivestogo.com

Weight: 5% oz.

Blade dimensions: 81/4 x 13/4 inches

The stainless-steel blade and handle on this knife are well balanced and of moderate weight. The blade itself is narrow, fairly straight, and holds a very sharp edge. It sails through potatoes and onions with ease. For those who tend to grip the blade between the index finger and thumb (a pinch grip), the angle of the heel and bolster may feel a bit awkward, but most should find this knife easy to use and a terrific value for the price.

### ■ FOR THE NONCONFORMIST Takeda AS 210 mm gyuto knife

#### \$260 at chefknivestogo.com

Weight: 5½ oz. Blade dimensions: 8¼ x 2¾ inches

Handcrafted by Shosui Takeda and his two blacksmiths, this knife is rustic and thoroughly unique. Its octagonally cut rosewood handle is lightweight and beautifully unadorned. The wide carbon-steel blade has an uneven texture that is naturally nonstick (even potatoes slide off easily) but not naturally rustproof; it requires proper care. The cutting edge of the blade is straight, reminiscent of a cleaver, and performs best with a straight up-and-down chop versus a more typical forward-slice motion. Most notably, this knife is seriously sharp and holds its edge better than any of the others.

#### How we tested

After combing the marketplace and speaking to several knife experts, we chose 20 knives for testing. We sliced, diced, and chopped our way through mounds of onions, tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, garlic, and parsley. We evaluated each knife's size, shape, weight, balance, handle, and performance. Above all, we noted each knife's sharpness, which we assessed by cutting through paper, creating ultrathin slices of potatoes and lemons, and cutting least amount of pressure.

MIYABI GOOMC

CHANGE AND CANBOR OF

■ FOR THE DESIGN LOVER Shun Premier 8-inch chef's knife

#### \$188 at surlatable.com

Weight: 7% oz. Blade dimensions:  $8 \times 1\%$  inches

This is a stunning knife. Its high-carbon stainless-steel core is coated with Damascus steel, creating a rippled look on one half of the blade; the other half features a lovely hammered texture called tsuchime. (The dimpled area supposedly minimizes sticking, but we didn't find any benefit in that regard.) The knife's impressively fine edge glides through onions and easily shears off parsley stems held in mid-air.

Because the cutting edge of the blade has a slight curve to it, it readily rocks back and forth when chopping herbs or mincing garlic. Its extra-thick and heavy wood handle may be comforting to some but awkward for others. For those who use a pinch grip, though, this knife is a natural.

▲ FOR THE CONNOISSEUR Miyabi 600MC 8-inch chef's knife

#### \$330 at bloomingdales.com

Weight: 6% oz. Blade dimensions: 8% x 1% inches

This knife is insanely sharp, and with a nearly 9-inch blade, flies through piles of greens and whole melons. Although some may find its size and weighty handle a bit unwieldy, others may view the long, exceptionally hard stainlesssteel blade and slender handle as sleek and racy. We like how the heel of the blade arcs away from the handle-for those who tend to use a pinch grip, this design keeps fingers a safe distance from the cutting edge. The gorgeously finished wood handle and softly rounded spine add a luxurious feel.

Sarah Jay is the author of Knives Cooks Love: Selection, Care, Techniques, Recipes.

# SWEETS & SPARKLERS

This do-ahead party pairs sophisticated desserts with sparkling wines for a new way to celebrate New Year's Eve. by tasha de serio PHOTOGRAPHS BY PERNILLE PEDERSEN

THE BEST PARTIES are as much fun for the hosts as they are for the guests—like this one. Cooks will get a kick out of the recipes, which take sweet classics and give them a modern spin by adding something savory—a fresh herb, sea salt, cheese. The idea gets even more interesting when the desserts are paired with a variety of sparkling wines: These are eye-opening matches.

The party itself can be a process of discovery, as everyone tries a different dessert with a different sparkler. And since all the sweets can be made ahead, there's no worry about getting left in the kitchen while your friends are having all the fun.

Dark chocolate almond bark and sweet-and-salty popcorn are perfect partners for dry sparkling wines. The gorgeous croquembouche (above and opposite) gets a finishing swirl of salty caramel







# SET THE SCENE

The brilliance of this menu is that every recipe can be made ahead and served at room temperature, so you can set out all of the desserts before your guests arrive. Here are some ideas for your dessert buffet:

- Arrange the desserts on one large table or place them throughout the party space so guests discover new treats as they move around.
- Set bowls or metal cones lined with parchment by the popcorn so guests can fill their own.
- Serve the chocolate bark on a mini cake stand, a footed compote dish, or a tiered stand.
- Stand the cheese straws in a tall, clear vase or small ice bucket, or mound them on a large platter.
- Arrange the tartlets on several platters or on a tiered stand with the chocolate bark.
- Roll napkins, wrap them with narrow pieces of decorative parchment (like napkin rings), and tie them with ribbon.

# salty caramel croquembouche with ricotta cream

This modern version of the French classic features ricotta cream filling for the puffs and a sea salt caramel coating. Serve this festive dessert the day it's assembled.

Yields about 70 cream puffs, more than enough for a 12-inch-tall croquembouche

#### FOR THE PASTRY CREAM

- 11/2 cups whole-milk ricotta
- 3 cups whole milk
- 3 large eggs
- 3 large egg yolks Table salt
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 6 Tbs. cornstarch
- 1 Tbs. pure vanilla extract
- 2¼ oz. (4½ Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces

#### FOR THE PÂTE À CHOUX PUFFS

- 71/2 oz. (15 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 2½ Tbs. granulated sugar Kosher salt
- 11¼ oz. (2½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour, sifted
- 10 large eggs

#### FOR ASSEMBLY

- 21/2 cups granulated sugar
  - 1 Tbs. sea salt
  - 4x12-inch (approximately) foam cone, covered in foil (ideally gold)
     Toothpicks

#### MAKE THE PASTRY CREAM

Drain the ricotta in a fine sieve set over a small bowl in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours and up to 1 day.

Warm the milk in a heavy-duty 3-quart saucepan over medium heat until steaming, 3 to 4 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk the eggs, egg yolks, and ½ tsp. salt in a medium bowl. Gradually whisk in the sugar. Whisk in the cornstarch and vanilla until smooth.

Slowly whisk a little of the hot milk into the egg mixture to warm it, then whisk the mixture into the pot of milk. Whisk in the butter and cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until the pastry cream is very thick and registers 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, 2 to 3 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve into a medium bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing it onto the surface of the cream, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

**Purée the ricotta** in a food processor until very smooth, about 8 minutes. Stir it into the pastry cream and refrigerate until ready to use or for up to 1 day.

#### MAKE AND FILL THE PÂTE À CHOUX PUFFS

Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F.

Bring 2½ cups of water and the butter, sugar, and 1¼ tsp. salt to a boil in a 4-quart saucepan over medium-low heat. When the butter melts, remove from the heat and add the flour. Set the pan over low heat and stir with a wooden spoon until the mixture forms a smooth ball that pulls away from the sides of the pan, about 2 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on low speed until cool to the touch. On medium-low speed, beat in the eggs one by one, mixing until each is fully incorporated before adding the next.

Let the dough cool for about 10 minutes. Transfer half of the dough to a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch plain tip (Ateco #806). Onto 2 parchment-lined rimmed baking sheets, pipe small, 1½-inch-high mounds (like chocolate kisses) at 2-inch intervals. Smooth the surface of the mounds with a wet finger. Lower the oven temperature to 375°F and

bake, rotating the sheets from top to bottom after 10 minutes, until the puffs are evenly golden-brown, 20 to 25 minutes total. Turn off the oven and remove the puffs from the oven. Prick the side of each puff with a paring

knife to release the steam. Return the puffs to the turned-off oven with the door ajar to dry them for 3 to 5 minutes. Remove the puffs from the baking sheets and transfer to a rack to cool

Repeat with the remaining dough on freshly lined baking sheets. (The puffs are best used the same day, but they can be made a day ahead and stored in an airtight container at room temperature.)

#### **ASSEMBLE THE CROQUEMBOUCHE**

Sort the puffs according to size: small, medium, and large. Transfer about half of the pastry cream to a piping bag fitted with a ¼-inch plain tip (Ateco # 802 or #10). Poke the tip into the bottom of each puff and fill with the pastry cream, being careful not to overfill. Refill the pastry bag as needed.

Have a large bowl of ice water ready. Put the sugar and salt in a 3-quart heavy-duty saucepan. Add % cup water and swirl to moisten the sugar. Cover and boil over high heat until starting to turn golden around the edges, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove the lid and cook, swirling occasionally, until the caramel is light golden, 1 to 2 minutes more. Immediately put the bottom of the pot in the ice water to stop the cooking. Remove the pot from the water and put it on a heatproof surface.

**Turn to Test Kitchen,** p. 87, for step-by-step assembly instructions.

You can assemble the croquembouche up to 2 hours ahead provided it's not too humid; a moist environment will cause the caramel to soften. Don't refrigerate the croquembouche. Serve any extra cream puffs on the side.



Watch the step-by-step construction of a croquembouche at FineCooking.com/extras.





#### THE BUBBLY BAR

Who knew Champagne made such a good food wine? As it turns out, sparkling wines and desserts are made for each other. These bottles fall on the dry side to offset the sweet treats, and bubbles cleanse your palate between bites (so you can eat more!). Each pairs well with all the desserts, which means you can set up a "bar" of options for guests to try.

Bisson Prosecco dei Colli Trevigiani 2008, Liguria, Italy (\$16) An Italian sparkler that goes down easy, with hints of Meyer lemons and apricots.

Dr. Becker Scheurebe Sekt 2007, Rheinhessen, Germany (\$20) Dry and refreshing, this wine is loaded with stone fruits and perfectly balanced natural sugars.

Coppo Brachetto d'Acqui 2006, Piedmont, Italy (\$28) This elegant coppery-pink sparkler (made from Brachetto grapes) is medium bodied, with an explosion of soft mixed berries and floral aromatics.

Wolffer Blanc de Blancs 2006, Long Island, New York (\$35) Reminiscent of the great wines of Champagne, this bright, minerally sparkler has a dense texture and excellent finish.

René Geoffroy Rosé de Saignée Champagne, France (\$58) This wine will make your mouth water with layers of red fruits, caramel, and brioche.

# apple, fennel, and cheddar cheese straws

A sweet-tart apple purée, fennel seeds, and sharp Cheddar give crisp puff pastry straws big hits of flavor, both savory and sweet. The small holes of a box grater work best for grating the cheese; a rasp-style grater is too fine.

#### Yields about 4 dozen

- 34 oz. (11/2 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 1½ lb. crisp apples (such as Sierra Beauty, Pippin, or Braeburn), peeled, cored, and cut into ¼-inch pieces

#### Kosher salt

Granulated sugar, as needed Fresh lemon juice, as needed

- 3 ½-lb. sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed (from two 1.1-lb. packages)
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 11/2 tsp. fennel seed, coarsely crushed
- 11/2 oz. finely grated sharp Cheddar (3/4 cup)

Melt the butter in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the apples and season lightly with salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until very tender and caramelized, 10 to 15 minutes. If there is any liquid remaining in the pan, remove the lid and allow it to evaporate.

**Purée the apples** in a blender or food processor until very smooth. Taste the purée; it should be a little tart, but if it's too tart, add a pinch of sugar. If it tastes a little flat, add another pinch of salt or a couple drops of fresh lemon juice, or both. Refrigerate until completely chilled, about 20 minutes.

On a lightly floured work surface, roll out one sheet of the puff pastry into a 12x14-inch rectangle. Brush off any excess flour. Orient the dough so a 12-inch side is parallel to the edge of your work surface. Spread a thin, even layer of the apple purée over the bottom half of the dough. Fold the other half of the dough over the purée so that the dough measures 12x7 inches. Trim the edges. Transfer the dough to a baking sheet lined with parchment and refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes. Meanwhile, roll out the other sheets of dough and repeat the process. (It may not be necessary to use all of the apple purée.)

Lightly brush one of the chilled dough rectangles with the egg. Sprinkle ½ tsp. of the fennel and then ½ oz. of the cheese in an even layer on top. Season lightly with salt. Gently run a rolling pin over the surface to press the seeds and cheese into the dough. Chill while you repeat

with the remaining dough, fennel, and cheese.

Working with one rectangle at a time,

slide the puff pastry onto a cutting board. Using a pizza cutter, cut the dough lengthwise into long, thin strips about ½ inch wide. Working with one strip at a time, hold both ends and twist slightly (if the dough is too firm to work with, give it a few minutes to soften). Transfer the twists to 3 unlined heavy-duty rimmed baking sheets, spacing them about ¼ inch apart and pressing the ends of each strip onto the pan to help hold the shape while baking. Cover and refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes.

Position racks in the top, center, and bottom thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 425°F. Put the cheese straws in the oven and reduce the heat to 375°F. Bake until golden, 20 to 23 minutes, swapping the sheets' positions after 10 minutes. Turn off the oven, open the door, and leave the straws in the oven until very crisp, about 1 hour. Using a long metal spatula, carefully release the straws from the baking sheets. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

These are best baked and eaten on the same day, but they can be shaped in advance on the baking sheets and refrigerated for up to 1 day or frozen for up to 1 week. Bake them directly from the freezer.



# bittersweet chocolate bark with marcona almonds

If you can't find Spanish Marcona almonds, which are generally sold salted, use toasted blanched almonds and add a good pinch of salt to the brittle.

#### Yields about 2 lb.

- 1 cup plus 2 Tbs. granulated sugar
- oz. Marcona almonds, coarsely chopped and sifted
- lb. bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

#### MAKE THE ALMOND BRITTLE

Line a heavy-duty rimmed baking sheet with foil. Put the sugar in a 2-quart heavy-duty saucepan. Add 1/4 cup water and swirl (don't stir) to moisten. Cover and boil over high heat until starting to turn golden around the edges, about 4 minutes. Remove the lid and cook, swirling occasionally, until the caramel is deep amber, 3 to 4 minutes more. Stir in half of the nuts. Pour the mixture onto the foil-covered baking sheet, and spread to 1/2 inch thick. Cool completely at room temperature.

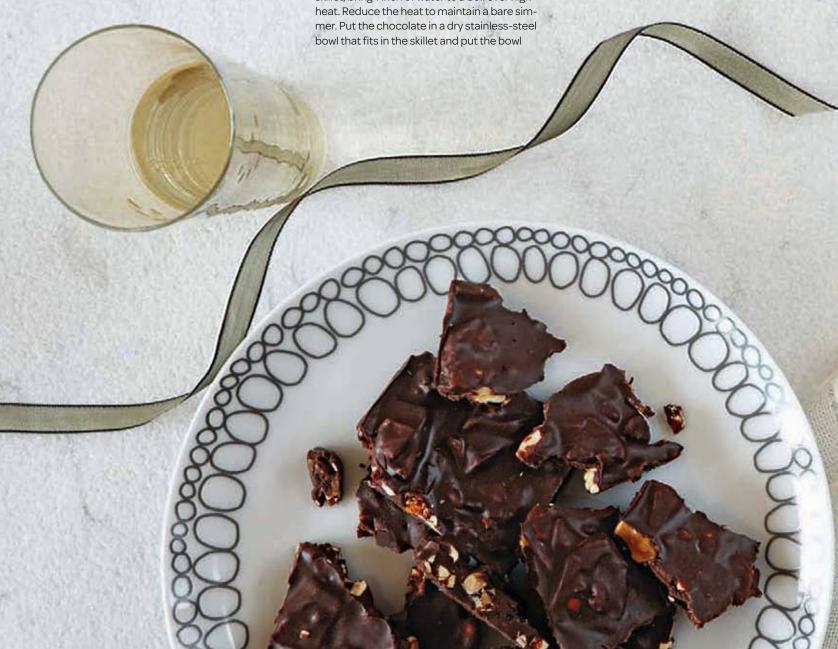
Peel the brittle off the foil, chop coarsely, and sift through a medium-fine sieve to remove the extra-small pieces and the brittle dust, which will make the chocolate bark too sweet. At this point, you can proceed with making the bark, or store the brittle in an airtight container in the freezer for up to a week.

#### MAKE THE CHOCOLATE BARK

Line two 8x8-inch pans with foil. In a 12-inch skillet, bring 1 inch of water to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to maintain a bare simmer. Put the chocolate in a dry stainless-steel bowl that fits in the skillet and put the bowl

in the simmering water bath. Stir until most of the chocolate is melted, about 5 minutes. Remove the bowl from the water—be careful not to get any water in the chocolate—and stir until smooth. Stir in the remaining almonds and the almond brittle.

Divide the chocolate mixture between the prepared pans, making sure that none of the brittle is exposed. (The brittle will sweat and soften if not coated in chocolate.) Shake the pan a little to level the chocolate. Refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes. Turn out the bark and remove the foil. Cut into small, rustic pieces and refrigerate for up to 1 week before serving.



# rosemary-lemon tartlets with pine nut shortbread

This recipe uses 2-inch tartlet molds (you'll need 25), which turn out elegant, two-bite tarts.

Yields about fifty 2-inch tartlets

#### FOR THE LEMON CURD

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbs. freshly squeezed lemon juice (from about 3 medium lemons)
- 2 Tbs. finely grated lemon zest (from about 2 medium lemons)
- 1 Tbs. very finely chopped rosemary
- 8 large egg yolks
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 oz. (½ cup) cold, unsalted butter, cut into pieces

#### FOR THE SHORTBREAD DOUGH

- 7 oz. (1½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 oz. (1/2 cup) confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 1/2 cup pine nuts, very finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 6 oz. (¾ cup) unsalted butter, softened Nonstick cooking spray

#### FOR THE GARNISH

- 2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup pine nuts

  Kosher salt

#### MAKE THE LEMON CURD

Bring 2 inches of water in a 3-quart saucepan to a simmer over medium heat. In a stainlesssteel bowl that fits snugly in the saucepan without touching the water, combine the sugar, lemon juice, lemon zest, and rosemary. Set the bowl over the saucepan, whisk in the egg yolks, and continue to whisk until the mixture thickens and registers 160°F on an instant-read thermometer, 5 to 10 minutes. Turn off the heat, leaving the bowl over the water. Add the salt and then whisk in one piece of butter at a time, whisking until smooth between each addition. Strain through a fine sieve into a medium bowl and cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly on the surface of the curd. Refrigerate until well chilled, 3 hours or up to 2 days.

#### MAKE THE SHORTBREAD DOUGH

Put the flour, confectioners' sugar, pine nuts, and salt in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, and mix on low speed to combine. Add the butter and continue to mix on low speed until the dough is smooth, about 1 minute. Divide the dough in thirds,

wrap each piece in plastic, and press into flat disks. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

#### **BAKE THE SHELLS IN TWO BATCHES**

Spray twenty-five 2-inch flared or fluted tartlet molds with cooking spray. Working with one round of the shortbread dough at a time, roll the dough between two pieces of parchment to a 1/8-inch thickness. Using a 21/2-inch round cutter, cut the dough into circles-you'll need 25 circles for the first batch. Gather any scraps and refrigerate for re-rolling. Using a metal spatula, transfer the rounds to the tartlet pans and press the dough into the pans. Trim the tart dough so that it's flush with the pan by pressing along the rim of the pan with your thumb. Prick each tartlet shell several times with a fork, arrange on a rimmed baking sheet, and refrigerate until chilled, about 30 minutes.

**Meanwhile,** position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

**Bake the tartlet shells** until they're deep golden-brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer the shells to a rack to cool. Remove the shells from the pans and store in a sealed container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

**Repeat rolling and cutting** the remaining dough and scraps, which you can re-roll once, to yield 25 more circles. Bake, cool, and store as above.

#### MAKE THE GARNISH

Heat the oil in an 8-inch skillet over medium heat. When the oil shimmers, add the pine nuts. Toss the nuts until browned, 30 seconds to 1 minute. With a small slotted spoon, transfer the nuts to a paper-towel-lined plate. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt, and cool. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

#### **ASSEMBLE THE TARTLETS**

Put the lemon curd in a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch plain tip (Ateco #806). Pipe the curd into the tartlet shells and top each with 3 pine nuts. (Reserve any remaining curd for another use.) The tartlets may be assembled up to 4 hours ahead.

A former Chez Panisse cook, Tasha DeSerio is co-proprietor of Olive Green Catering in Berkeley, California. □



# Classic Beef Wellington

This traditional British dish is the ultimate Christmas centerpiece. Our step-by-step guide including homemade pâté, crêpes, and puff pastry—will help you master it. ву sopнie grigson

#### Beef Tenderloin

The star of the show. This indulgent cut is mild, ultratender, and very juicy, thanks to its good marbling (ribbons of fat that melt during cooking).

#### Duxelles

A rich paste of mushrooms, shallots, parsley, and butter-a classic flavoring tool of French cuisineenvelopes the seared beef tenderloin.

Thin, savory pancakes are wrapped around the beef to absorb its juices during cooking. They keep the puff pastry crust from getting soggy.

# Madeira Sauce Madeira is a fortified wine that brings great depth to this sauce. Homemade beef broth plays a big part, too, adding hearty meatiness that complements the tenderloin. Puff Pastry Crisp, golden, and buttery, a puff pastry crust is the perfect counterpoint to the tender meat, crêpes, and unctuous mushroom and pâté mixture. Pâté Smooth, mousse-like pâté is an essential component of beef Wellington, adding fat and flavor without overwhelming the beef. FINECOOKING.COM 55

The origins of the Wellington are far from clear. One patriotic fancy is that it was created to commemorate the British defeat of the French archenemy, Napoleon, at the battle of Waterloo in 1815, led by the all-conquering Duke of Wellington. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to back this up. The Duke of Wellington was known to have little interest in food, so he probably wouldn't have cared two hoots for any chef's tribute. Imaginative souls have also





# classic beef wellington

You can assemble the Wellington 3 hours ahead (for a timeline, see Test Kitchen, p. 87). Serve it with boiled or roasted baby potatoes and lightly cooked Savoy cabbage.

#### Serves 8

#### FOR THE BEEF STOCK

- 4 lb. meaty beef bones, such as ribs or marrow bones
- 1/4 cup vegetable or sunflower oil
- 1 large yellow onion, quartered
- 1 large carrot, thickly sliced
- 1 medium leek, thickly sliced
- 1 medium celery stalk, thickly sliced
- 3½ oz. white mushrooms, quartered (1 cup)

- 1 cup dry vermouth or dry white wine
- 2 medium tomatoes, halved
- 10 sprigs fresh thyme
- 5 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 3 dried bay leaves

#### FOR THE DUXELLES

- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 Tbs. vegetable or sunflower oil
- 1/4 cup finely chopped shallots
- 1½ cups finely chopped portobello mushrooms (from 4 large caps; remove the stems and gills before chopping, preferably in a food processor)

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

#### FOR THE MADEIRA SAUCE

- 1 cup Madeira
  - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, diced

#### FOR THE CRÊPES

- 21/4 oz. (1/2 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/8 tsp. kosher salt
- 2 large eggs
- 3/4 cup whole milk
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter

Food styling by Samantha Senevirating

suggested that the dish was named for its resemblance to the Duke's favored footwear—the Wellington boot. But what self-respecting chef would name his creation after someone's clumpy footwear? More likely, the beef Wellington was an anglicized version of the traditional French boeuf en croûte (beef in puff pastry).

Where there's no mystery whatsoever is in the Wellington's long-lasting appeal. It's a gorgeous, classy party dish that blends a wealth of fabulous flavors. The beauty of this recipe is that you can make from scratch as many of the Wellington's components as you like, including homemade beef stock for the Madeira sauce, the chicken liver pâté, and the puff pastry (go to FineCooking.com/extras). So, if you are up for the ultimate dinner party challenge, clear your calendar, roll up your sleeves, and dust off your rolling pin. The Wellington awaits.



#### **FOR ASSEMBLY**

- Ib. center-cut beef tenderloin, trimmed, side muscle removed

  Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. vegetable or sunflower oil
- 26 cup chicken liver pâté (store-bought or homemade; recipe on p. 58)
- Ib. puff pastry (store-bought or homemade; recipe at FineCooking.com /extras), thawed overnight in the refrigerator if frozen
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp. unsalted butter, softened

#### MAKE THE BEEF STOCK

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F.

Arrange the beef bones in a single layer in a large flameproof roasting pan. Drizzle with 2 Tbs. of the oil and then rub the oil all over the bones. Roast, turning the bones every 20 minutes, until deep brown, about 1 hour 1. Put the remaining 2 Tbs. oil and the onion, carrot, leek, celery, and mushrooms in an 8-quart stockpot. Cover and cook over low heat, stirring once or twice, until tender, about 15 minutes. Uncover, raise the heat to medium, and cook until the vegetables are browned in spots, about 3 minutes.

Transfer the bones to the pot with the vegetables, leaving any rendered fat in the pan. Discard the fat from the pan, and set the pan over medium heat. Add the vermouth and bring to a boil, using a wooden spoon to scrape up any stuck-on bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the liquid to the bones and vegetables. Add about 1 gallon of water, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add the tomatoes, thyme, parsley, and bay leaves. Reduce the heat to low and simmer gently, uncovered—the stock should barely bubble—for 6 hours, topping up the water level occasionally to keep the solids covered.

Strain the stock through a fine sieve into a large bowl and cool to room temperature. Chill overnight; then skim off the layer of congealed fat. You'll have about 7 cups of stock. (The stock can be refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen for up to 2 months.)

#### **MAKE THE DUXELLES**

Heat the butter and oil in a 10-inch skillet over low heat. Add the shallots and cook, stirring often, until translucent, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms, stir well, and raise the heat to medium. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms have cooked down to a thick, almost black mixture, about 15 minutes. Season with a pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper. Stir in the parsley 2; then transfer to a small bowl and cool completely. (The duxelles can be refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen for up to 2 months.)

#### **BEGIN THE MADEIRA SAUCE**

Bring 6 cups of the stock to a boil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat and boil until reduced to 2 cups, 20 to 25 minutes. Add the Madeira and continue boiling until the liquid is again reduced to 2 cups, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. (The sauce can be prepared to this point up to 1 day ahead. Finish the sauce just before serving the Wellington.)

#### MAKE THE CRÊPES

In a large bowl, whisk the flour and salt. Make a well in the center, break in the eggs, and add 1/4 cup of the milk. Gently whisk the eggs and milk, gradually incorporating the flour. Slowly whisk in the remaining milk to make a smooth batter. (The batter can be covered and set aside for up to an hour at this point.)

Melt the butter in a 10-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Swirl the pan to coat with the butter; pour the excess butter out into a

small bowl. Whisk 1 Tbs. of the melted butter into the batter. Reserve the rest for greasing the pan between crêpes. Increase the heat to medium high and pour ¼ cup of the batter into the skillet. Swirl so the batter thinly and evenly coats the base of the pan.

Cook until the crêpe is spotted with brown on the underside 3, about 1 minute, then flip and cook the other side until lightly browned, 30 seconds to 1 minute more. Repeat with the remaining batter, greasing the pan off the heat as necessary. Transfer the crêpes to a plate, separating them with sheets of parchment, and cool. You'll need 4 crêpes. (The crêpes may be made 1 day ahead. Wrap well and refrigerate.)

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE THE WELLINGTON Remove the beef from the refrigerator about an hour ahead so it has time to lose its chill. Pat the beef dry and season all over with salt







This pâté is unlike any store-bought pâté you've tried-it's rich but mild, with a dense, ultrasmooth texture. This recipe yields 2 ramekins of pâté; use one for the Wellington and save the other to enjoy with crackers.

#### Yields 11/3 cups

- 4 oz. (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, melted; more for the ramekins
- oz. chicken livers (about 1 cup)

- 2 medium shallots, chopped (1/4 cup)
- 1 medium clove garlic, chopped
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 21/2 Tbs. Madeira
- 2½ Tbs. brandy
- 2 large eggs Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

and pepper. Heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over high heat until very hot. Sear the beef until it is evenly browned all over (don't worry about the ends), 2 to 3 minutes per side.

Transfer the beef to a baking sheet and cool. In a medium bowl, mash the pâté and the duxelles with a fork until they form a soft paste.

Lay 4 crêpes on a clean work surface, overlapping them just enough to give you a 13x13-inch roughly square surface. Dot the pâté mixture over the crêpes, then use an offset spatula to spread it evenly across the crêpes' surface 4.

crêpes and carefully wrap them around the filet 5, pressing and molding them into place. Trim off any excess crêpe at the ends.

If using store-bought puff pastry that's packaged as 2 sheets, fuse the sheets together by slightly overlapping them and lightly rolling over the seam until adhered.

Place the tenderloin in the center of the

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the puff pastry to a 13x16-inch rectangle (for storebought puff, roll in the direction of the seam). Transfer the wrapped beef to the center of the pastry and tuck any crêpes that have come loose back into place. Bring the pastry up around the beef, smoothing out any air pockets 6. Brush some of the beaten egg along the bottom edge of the seam and then press gently to seal 7; trim off any excess. Seal the pastry similarly at the ends.

Lightly grease a large baking sheet with the butter. Lift the Wellington onto the sheet.

butter. Lift the Wellington onto the sheet, seam side down. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes and up to 3 hours. (If refrigerating longer than 1 hour, let the Wellington sit at room temperature for 1 hour before baking.)

At least 20 minutes before baking, position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 475°F.

Brush the Wellington with the remaining beaten egg. Using a sharp knife, score the surface of the pastry with diagonal lines, being careful not to cut all the way through the pastry 8. Put the Wellington in the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 425°F. Roast for 10 minutes, then reduce the heat to 400°F and roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the Wellington registers 135°F for medium rare, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer to a carving board and let the Wellington rest for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, finish the sauce: Heat the sauce in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. When it begins to simmer, reduce the heat to low and whisk in the butter a few pieces at a time. Do not allow it to boil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**Thickly slice** the Wellington and serve it with the sauce.





**Position a rack** in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 325°F. Butter two 8-oz. ramekins.

Inspect the chicken livers; trim and discard any green-yellow patches. Cut each liver in half. Put the shallots, garlic, thyme, Madeira, and brandy in a small pot and bring to a boil over medium heat. Simmer, checking frequently, until reduced to about 1 Tbs. of liquid, 2 to 3 minutes. Strain and reserve the liquid.

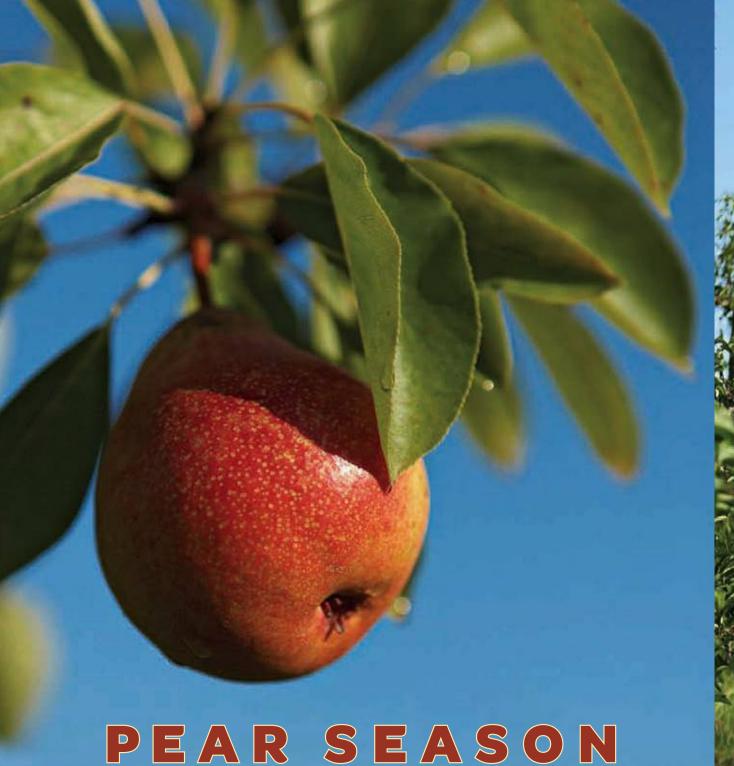
**Put the chicken livers** in a food processor. Add the eggs, the reserved liquid, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper. Process until smooth, about 30 seconds, gradually pouring in the melted butter while the motor is running. Strain the mixture into the ramekins.

**Put the ramekins** in a 9x13-inch baking dish and pour in enough hot water to come about 1 inch up the sides of the ramekins. Bake until puffed, golden-brown, and set, 25 to 30 minutes. Remove the ramekins from the roasting pan and cool completely. If not using immediately, cover tightly with plastic wrap once the pâté is cool, and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Sophie Grigson is an award-winning British food writer and cookbook author.



Watch a video on making Beef Wellington and get a recipe for puff pastry at Fine Cooking.com/extras.



The fruit of the moment is an amazingly versatile ingredient in recipes both sweet and savory. BY MELISSA PELLEGRINO

I'M A SHOPAHOLIC. Not for clothes or jewelry or shoes, but for food. I can't drive by a farmers' market, or even a favorite grocery store, without stopping to see what looks good. And perfect in-season pears are a fall favorite that always make it into my basket.

Not only are pears great for eating out of hand, but I love cooking with them, too. There are so many wonderful varieties to choose from, each with its own flavor, texture, and aroma. Some, like Boscs and Seckels, are firm enough to be poached or braised, while others, like Comice pears, should be barely heated so they retain their delicious bite.

These recipes, which show off pears in both sweet and savory ways, suggest specific varieties, but adventurous cooks will get a kick out of trying any of the many pears available now (see the Buyer's Guide, page 64). Lucky for me-and my shopping habit-the possibilities in the kitchen are endless.





In this delicious salad, the salty, buttery flavor of Gorgonzola dolce (a mild, slightly aged, spreadable type of Gorgonzola) mingles with the sweet, juicy pears. Slices of pancetta, baked until crisp, add texture and another savory note.

#### Serves 4

- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 tsp. mild honey, such as clover
- 2 medium firm-ripe red pears (preferably red Anjou), halved lengthwise and cored Kosher salt
- 8 thin slices pancetta (about 2½ oz.)
- ½ cup plus 1 Tbs. chopped, toasted hazelnuts
- 2 oz. Gorgonzola dolce (¼ cup)
- ½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 11/2 Tbs. Champagne vinegar
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 oz. mâche (about 4 cups)

Photographs by Scott Phillips

Position racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 375°F.

In a small bowl, mix the melted butter and 1 tsp. of the honey. Brush the mixture over the cut sides of the pears and season with salt. Arrange the pears cut sides up

on a rimmed baking sheet and bake on the upper rack until just tender, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, arrange the pancetta on a rimmed baking sheet and bake on the lower rack until crisp, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate.

In a small bowl, mix ¼ cup of the hazelnuts, the Gorgonzola dolce, thyme, and the remaining 1 tsp. honey with the back of a wooden spoon.

Remove the pears from the oven and divide the cheese filling evenly among the pear cavities. Sprinkle with the remaining hazelnuts and bake on the upper rack until the cheese starts to soften, about 3 minutes. Turn the broiler on high and broil until the nuts brown slightly, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool slightly.

In a small bowl, mix the vinegar, mustard, ¼ tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Gradually whisk in the oil. Toss the mâche with just enough vinaigrette to lightly coat and divide among 4 plates. Top each salad with 2 pancetta rounds and 1 pear half. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

# pear fritters with lemon and ginger

Pear, lemon, and ginger are a match made in heaven. These crisp-yet-tender fritters would make an excellent dessert at Hanukkah.

#### Yields about 40 fritters

- 2 small firm-ripe pears (preferably Bartlett), peeled, cored, and finely diced
- 1 Tbs. finely grated fresh ginger
- 1/2 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 11/2 cups plus 1 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. plus 1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3 large egg whites
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 6% oz. (1½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 to 21/2 cups canola oil

In a small bowl, combine the pears, ginger, lemon zest, 1 Tbs. of the sugar, and ½ tsp. of the cinnamon. Macerate at room temperature for 15 minutes.

In a medium bowl, whisk the egg whites to soft peaks. In another medium bowl, whisk the milk, ½ cup of the sugar, and the vanilla until the sugar dissolves and the mixture is slightly frothy. Whisk in the flour just until combined—it shouldn't be completely smooth. With a rubber spatula, fold in the egg whites, and then fold in the pear

mixture. In a small bowl, mix the remaining 1 cup sugar and 2 tsp.

Pour ½ inch of oil into a 10-inch cast-iron skillet with a candy thermometer clipped to the side. Heat over medium-high heat to 350°F. Using 2 tablespoons or a

small ice cream scoop, carefully

drop a ball of batter into the hot oil.
Add 4 or 5 more to the oil, but don't crowd the pan. Fry until golden-brown, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, turn the fritters over and continue frying until golden-brown and cooked through, about 2 minutes more. Transfer to a paper-towellined plate and drain briefly. Toss in the cinnamon sugar to coat and transfer to a platter. Continue cooking the rest of the fritters in the same manner. Serve hot.



# wild rice with pears, sausage, and candied pecans

Take care not to overcook the Comice pears or they'll break down and lose their bite.

#### Serves 4

- 1 cup wild rice Kosher salt
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- oz. sweet Italian sausage (casings removed if using links), crumbled
- 1 small vellow onion, finely diced (about 1 cup)
- 2 Tbs. dry vermouth
- Tbs. chopped fresh sage
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 2 small fresh bay leaves (optional)
- 2 small ripe pears (preferably Comice), peeled, cored, cut lengthwise into 1/2-inch-thick wedges, and then crosswise into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 14 cup pecans
- 1 Tbs. packed dark brown sugar Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring 4 cups of water to a boil in a 4-quart saucepan. Add the wild rice and a generous pinch of salt, reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, and cook until tender, 30 to 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the sausage and cook, breaking up any big chunks with a spoon, until browned and cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the sausage to a paper-towellined plate. Add the onion and 1/2 tsp. salt to the skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 3 minutes. Add the vermouth and with a wooden spoon scrape up any browned bits from the pan; cook until the vermouth evaporates, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the sage, thyme, and bay leaves (if using), and continue cooking until the onion is very tender and the herbs are fragrant, 3 to 4 minutes. Return the sausage to the pan, add the pears, and cook just until warmed through, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside. In an 8-inch nonstick skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the pecans

and cook, stirring often, until lightly toasted, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the brown sugar and stir until melted and beginning to caramelize, 1 to 2 minutes. Sprinkle with a pinch of sea salt, transfer to a plate, and let cool. Roughly chop the nuts.

When the wild rice is cooked, drain any excess water. Return the rice to the pan and cook over medium heat to dry out slightly, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove the bay leaves (if used) from the pear mixture. Add the pear mixture to the wild rice and toss to combine. Season to taste with sea salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving bowl, sprinkle with the chopped nuts, and serve.

# PEARS: A BUYER'S GUIDE

If you have a penchant for pears, now is the time to get your fill. Pears are harvested from late August through the end of November, but thanks to cold storage, are available at the market through spring. These varieties are the most common.



#### **ANJOU** October - March This thin-skinned,

egg-shaped pear can be bright green or deep crimson. It's juicy, with a sweet, delicate flavor and creamy texture. When firm, it's great for poaching, grilling, baking, and braising. When ripe, it's best enjoyed raw.



#### September - April Known for its slender

shape and russet skin, the Bosc has a dense. grainy texture with a hint of nuttiness. Even fully ripe, this pear retains its firm bite, making it perfect for baking or cooking.



#### **FORELLE** October - March Bright yellow-green

with red speckles, this small pear has a round base that tapers evenly to a short neck. It's sweet, pleasantly juicy, and crisp, and holds up well to cooking.



#### **SECKEL** September -**February**

This small, thickskinned pear is typically olive-green but often sports a deep red blush that can completely cover it. The flesh is crisp, moist, and very sweet. It's ideal for poaching, braising, roasting, canning, or pickling.



#### COMICE September - March

With a distinctive stout body, the Comice is vellow-green with a rosy hue. It's one of the sweetest and most succulent pears with a rich buttery texture. The Comice is best eaten raw or very gently heated in recipes.



#### **BARTLETT** August - December

A large pear with a bell-shaped bottom and a slender neck the Bartlett can be light yellow-green or a deep red with yellow freckles It has a creamy texture, subtle flavor, and an intensely floral aroma. It's an excellent choice for baked goods.







#### COOKING CLASS



"IT'S A SPECIAL DISH," says Biba Caggiano, "one the whole family helps make at Christmas or for New Year's Eve." A cooking teacher, chef, and cookbook author, Biba remembers watching her Italian mother make tortellini en brodo for holiday celebrations. "She'd roll out the golden sheets of pasta with a long wooden rolling pin and fill the tortellini with an aromatic meat mixture. Then my brother, sister, and I would all pitch in, sealing the dough around the filling and bending each tortellino around our fingers to give it a crown-like shape."

Biba grew up in Bologna, capital of the northern Italian region of Emilia-Romagna. The city is known for its handmade pastas and for its excellent local products. "Stuffed pastas, especially tortellini, are dear to the hearts of the Bolognese people," says Biba. "They are stuffed with the best foods of the region: pork loin, prosciutto di Parma, mortadella di Bologna, and Parmigiano-Reggiano."

Biba's recipe calls for these classic ingredients (see The Bolognese Kitchen, page 72), many of which go into her tortellini filling. For this step-by-step cooking class, she will show you how to make fresh pasta and then cut, fill, and shape it. You'll also learn to make the deeply flavored meat broth the tortellini are traditionally cooked and served in. By the end of class, you'll have a new (and delicious) tradition for your own family's holiday.

# tortellini en brodo

This comforting dish of stuffed pasta in a hearty broth is a holiday tradition in northern Italy. It's often served as a first course, followed by a pork or veal roast and lots of winter vegetables. Both the tortellini and the broth can be made ahead.

Yields about 6 quarts of broth and about 200 tortellini; serves 14

#### FOR THE BROTH

- 1 4-lb. chicken, cut into 6 pieces
- 2 lb. veal bones or veal shank
- 2 lb. beef stew meat or scraps
- 1 medium yellow onion, quartered
- 2 medium carrots, cut into large pieces
- 2 celery stalks, cut into large pieces
- 1 3-inch-square Parmigiano-Reggiano rind (optional)

  Kosher salt

#### FOR THE FILLING

- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter
- 5 oz. boneless pork loin, trimmed and cut into ½-inch cubes (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 3 oz. sliced prosciutto, coarsely chopped (% cup)
- 3 oz. sliced mortadella, coarsely chopped (% cup)
- 1 oz. freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
  (½ cup grated on the small holes of
  a box grater)
- ½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten Kosher salt

#### FOR THE PASTA DOUGH

- 10½ oz. (2½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
  - 4 large eggs

#### **FOR SERVING**

Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

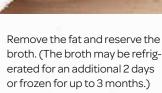
#### Make the broth

Wash the chicken, veal bones, beef, and vegetables under cold running water. Put all of the broth ingredients, except the salt, in a 10-quart pot and add 61/2 quarts (26 cups) of cold water. Partially cover the pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat. As soon as the water begins to bubble, reduce the heat to low and, with a fine-mesh skimmer or a large spoon, skim off and discard any foam that has risen to the surface 1. Partially cover the pot and simmer gently until the broth is flavorful, about 21/2 hours. Add 1 Tbs. salt during the last few minutes of cooking.

Remove the chicken and discard or save the meat for another use. Using a slotted spoon, discard the remaining solids from the broth. Strain the broth through



large bowl 2. You should have about 6 quarts of broth. Transfer the broth to storage containers and refrigerate overnight.







# Make the filling

a fine strainer into a large bowl.

Line the strainer with a clean thin

kitchen towel or cheesecloth and

strain the broth again into another

Melt the butter in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the pork and cook, stirring, until lightly golden and cooked through, about 4 minutes. Increase the heat to high, pour in the wine, and stir until it is almost evaporated, 3 to 5 minutes. Let cool slightly. Transfer the pork and its juices to a food processor. Add the prosciutto and mortadella and pulse until the mixture is very finely chopped (but not puréed) 3.

Transfer the filling to a medium bowl and add the Parmigiano, nutmeg, egg, and ¾ tsp. salt. Mix well. (The filling should be moist and just a little sticky 4.) Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate. (The filling may be made and refrigerated for up to 2 days or frozen for up to 1 month.)



#### COOKING CLASS

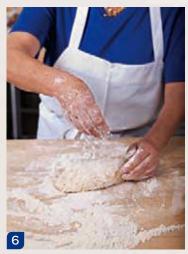
# Make the pasta dough

On a large wooden board or other work surface, shape the flour into a mound. Using your fingers, make a round well in the center of the flour. Carefully crack the eggs into the well, making sure they don't escape the walls of the well. Lightly beat the eggs with a fork. Begin to incorporate flour into the eggs with the fork  $\[ \mathbf{S} \]$ , starting from the inner rim of the well, until about half of the flour is incorporated and a soft dough begins to form.

With a dough scraper, push all of the remaining flour to one side of the board. Scrape off and discard the bits and pieces of dough attached to the board. Wash and dry your hands. Begin adding some of the flour you have pushed aside into the soft dough 6, kneading it gently with the heels of your hands as you incorporate the additional flour and the dough becomes firmer 7. Keep the board clean and dust it with flour as you knead to prevent the dough from sticking. After kneading for 8 to 10 minutes, the dough should be smooth, elastic, and just a little sticky.

Press one finger into the center of the dough **3**; if it comes out barely moist, the dough is ready to be rolled out. If the dough is still quite sticky, add a little more flour and knead it for 2 to 3 minutes longer until soft and pliable. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let it rest at room temperature for 20 to 30 minutes.













# Roll the pasta

Unwrap the dough and knead it for a minute or two. Set the rollers of a pasta machine at their widest. Cut off a piece of dough about the size of a small lemon and flatten it with the palm of your hand to about ½ inch thick. As you work, keep the rest of the dough wrapped in plastic. Dust the piece of dough lightly with flour and run it through the machine. Fold the rolled dough in half and run it through the machine again, pressing it with your fingertips into the rollers. Repeat this step 4 or 5 times, dusting the dough with flour if it becomes sticky, until smooth and elastic.

Change the rollers to the next setting down and roll out the dough without folding. Repeat rolling the sheet of dough (without folding) through the pasta machine, decreasing the settings until the pasta is ½ inch thick ①. On a floured wooden board, cut the dough into 1½-inch squares ②. Keep the squares covered with plastic as you shape the tortellini.







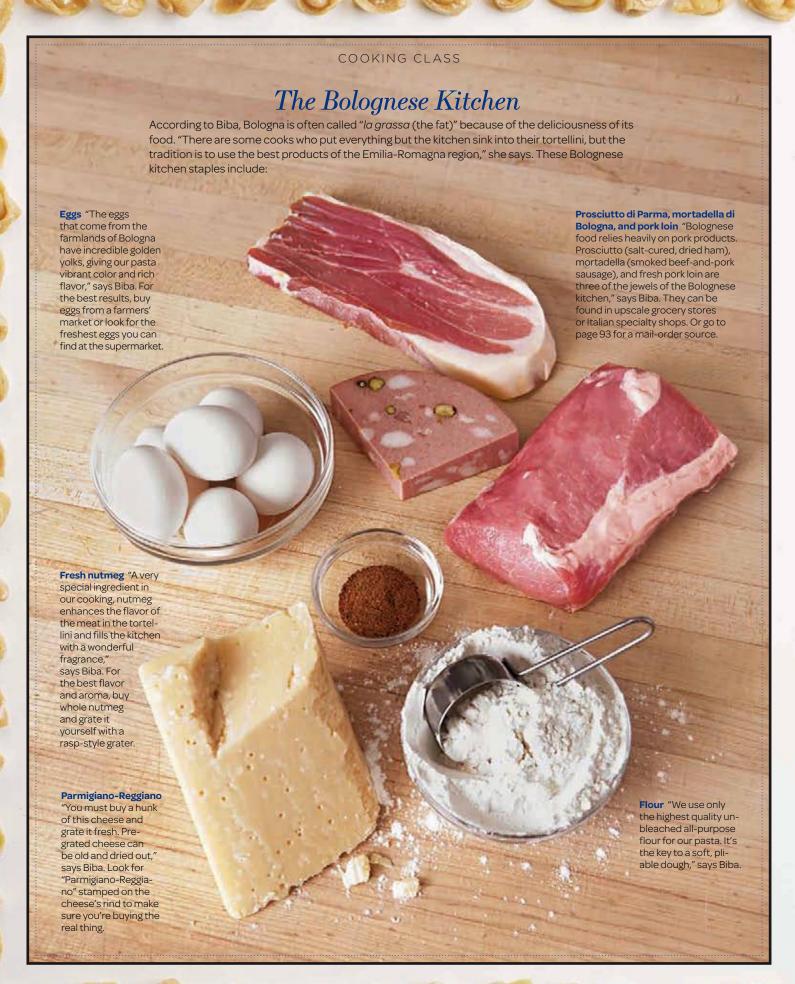


# Shape the tortellini

Put about % tsp. of the filling in the center of a pasta square. Bring one corner over the filling toward the corner diagonally opposite and fold into a triangle 11. Press around the filling to seal 12. Bend the tortellino around your finger 13 with one corner slightly overlapping the other and

press to seal. The tortellino will look like a crown 14. Transfer to a large rimmed baking sheet lined with a clean kitchen towel. Arrange the tortellini in a single layer without letting them touch (you'll need 2 to 3 baking sheets) and cover with another clean towel.

Repeat the filling and shaping with the remaining pasta and filling. (The tortellini can be refrigerated, loosely covered with a towel, for up to 1 day. Or freeze the tortellini on the baking sheets; then transfer to freezer bags and freeze for up to 3 months.)





# Ham ItUp

It's not cured. It's not smoked. It's a fresh ham, and it makes a fine, festive roast-with stellar breakfast and dinner leftovers, to boot.

BY BRUCE WEINSTEIN AND MARK SCARBROUGH

NOT EVERYONE CAN TELL YOU the difference between a fresh ham and a cured or smoked ham. Not even some of the guys who raise the pigs, as we discovered when trying to buy a fresh ham from a farmer down the road from us in rural New England.

- "You want what?" the farmer said.
- "A fresh ham. You know, from the back end of the pig."
- "You want me to smoke it for you?"
- "No, thanks. We'll take it just as it is."
- "You don't want to turn it into a ham?"
- "It is a ham!" we said.

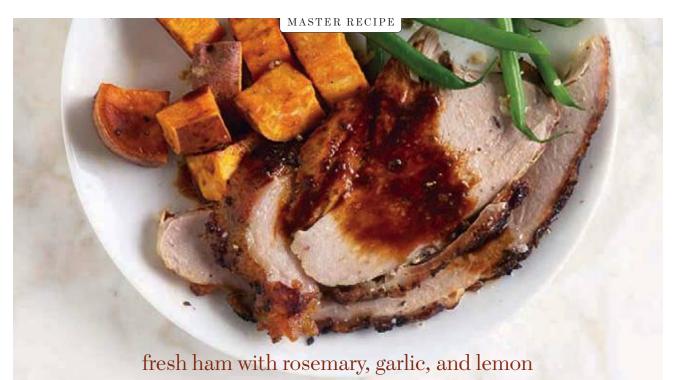
There was no arguing with him. A ham, he lectured us, was a cured hunk of porcine hindquarter. We knew better, but when you're the newcomers in a small town, there's no use riling up the long-time locals.

A ham is the cut of meat from a hog's hind leg. When unprocessed, it's simply called fresh ham and can be cooked whole, making it about the finest pork roast there is. As it cooks, its marbled fat slowly melts, infusing the meat with moisture and rich flavor. All it really needs beforehand is a simple rub. Served with a delicious pan sauce, it makes for a memorable feast.

Even with voracious eaters at your table, a roast this size pretty much guarantees leftovers. Here, we've come up with two savory breakfast (or breakfast-for-dinner) options—a spin on the croque-madame sandwich and a savory polenta spoonbread—as well as a satisfying lo mein stir-fry. So find a fresh ham, roast and enjoy it, and then keep cooking in the days that follow. It'll be worth it, even if you have to risk the ire of locals.







With just a few seasonings rubbed on a day ahead, a slow-roasted fresh ham becomes a juicy, fork-tender, and fragrant holiday centerpiece. Serve with roasted sweet potatoes and lightly sautéed green beans.

Serves 6, with enough leftovers to make all of the recipes that follow

#### FOR THE HAM

- 81/2 lb. bone-in fresh halfham, preferably shank end, rind (skin) removed
  - 1 medium lemon
- 14 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh rosemary leaves
- 6 medium cloves garlic, halved Kosher salt and freshly
- ground black pepper 1/4 cup white wine vinegar

#### FOR THE PAN SAUCE

- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 cup lower-salt chicken broth
- 2 tsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tsp. all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbs. cherry jam

#### PREPARE THE HAM

Set the ham fat side up in a large heavy-duty roasting pan. Use a sharp knife to score the fat in a 1-inch diamond pattern, cutting only about three-quarters of the way through the fat. Peel the zest from the lemon with a vegetable peeler, avoiding the white pith. Put the zest, olive oil, rosemary, garlic, 1 Tbs. salt, and 1 tsp. pepper in a food processor and pulse to a coarse paste. Rub this mixture all over the ham. Cover the pan tightly with foil and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours. Position a rack in the oven so that the ham will sit as high as possible but still have at least 2 inches head space for air circulation. Heat the oven to 350°F.

Keep the ham covered with the foil and roast for 3 hours. Uncover the pan and drizzle the vinegar over the ham, taking care not to wash off the coating. Continue roasting, basting every 15 minutes or so, until the ham is well browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the meat without touching bone registers 170°F (check in several places), 1 to 1½ hours more. If the ham or drippings begin to brown too much, cover loosely with foil to prevent burning. Transfer the ham to a carving board to rest while you make the sauce.

#### MAKE THE SAUCE

Pour the pan drippings into a bowl, let sit until the fat rises to the top, and then skim off the fat. Return the skimmed drippings to the roasting pan and set the pan over medium heat. Whisk in the wine, scraping up any particles stuck to the pan's bottom. Whisk in the broth, add ½ cup water, and continue to boil until the liquid is reduced by one-third, about 2 minutes. Meanwhile, use a fork to mash the butter with the flour in a small bowl or ramekin to create a thick paste. Whisk the cherry jam into the sauce, then add the butter paste in parts, whisking until the paste is fully dissolved and the sauce is simmering and thickened. Carve the ham (see Test Kitchen, p. 87) and serve with the sauce. Leftover ham will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days and in the freezer for up to 2 months.

# ham and polenta spoonbread

Traditionally served in the South, spoon-bread is a savory pudding-like dish that makes hearty breakfast fare (although it's great for dinner, too). Here, it's livened up with a dose of fresh herbs.

#### Serves 6 to 8

- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter; more for the pan
- 3 cups milk (whole or low-fat) Kosher salt
- 3/3 cup quick-cooking polenta
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- ½ lb. leftover roasted fresh ham (recipe opposite), chopped (about 2 cups)
- 4 oz. fontina, grated (1 cup)
- 2 oz. Asiago, grated (1/2 cup)
- 2 large eggs, separated
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh basil
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh oregano
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 3 dashes red hot pepper sauce, such as Tabasco

Freshly ground black pepper

tinue whisking until thick, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and set aside. **Melt 2 Tbs. of the butter** in a 12-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Add the onion and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden and soft, about 15 minutes. Add the ham and stir often until warmed through, about 2 minutes. **Stir the ham mixture,** cheeses, egg yolks, basil, oregano, thyme, hot pepper sauce, ½ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper into the polenta; mix well.

In a medium bowl, beat the egg whites with an electric mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Fold the beaten egg whites into the polenta and then spread the mixture in the prepared baking pan. Cut the remaining 2 Tbs. butter into pieces and dot on top.

**Bake until brown** and puffed, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes before serving with a large spoon.

# Buyer's Guide

#### WHATITIS

A whole ham is often cut into two half-ham sections: the more common shank end (a thick oval surrounding a center bone that tapers to a smaller point) and the butt end (higher up on the hog, with a complicated bone structure that can make carving tricky). For the best presentation, go for the shank end.

#### **HOW TO BUY**

Fresh hams can be something of a rarity, but you may be able to order one at your supermarket's butcher counter. Supermarket varieties run from \$3 to \$5 per pound, and high-end butcher shops or heritage-breed farms often charge \$10 or \$12 per pound. Fresh hams are also available online: Try 8oclockranch.com, which sells bone-in fresh hams for \$3.75 per pound.



# croque-madame sandwiches

In this riff on the classic French croquemadame (a toasted ham and cheese sandwich topped with béchamel and a fried egg), roasted fresh ham replaces the typical cured ham.

#### Serves 4

- 5 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 21/2 Tbs. all-purpose flour
- 13/4 cup milk (whole or low-fat)
- 2 Tbs. brandy
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 14 tsp. fresh thyme
- 4 tsp. grated nutmeg Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 slices country-style white sandwich bread
- 4 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 4 oz. Gruyère, grated (1 cup)
- 12 oz. leftover roasted fresh ham (recipe on p. 76), sliced

- ½ oz. Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated (½ cup using a rasp-style grater)
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature

Melt 2 Tbs. of the butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour and continue whisking just until it turns beige, about 20 seconds. Whisk in the milk in a slow, steady stream; continue whisking until smooth, thickened, and slightly bubbling, 2 to 3 minutes. Whisk in the brandy, Worcestershire sauce, thyme, nutmeg, ¼ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper. Whisk for 30 seconds; then remove from the heat and set aside, whisking occasionally to prevent a skin from forming.

**Position a rack** 4 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler on high.

**Spread four of the bread slices** on one side with 1 tsp. Dijon mustard each. Layer the Gruyère and ham on the bread in this pattern: cheese, ham, cheese. Top with the remaining bread.

Melt 1 Tbs. of the butter in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Cook 2 of the sandwiches until brown and crisp, turning once halfway through the cooking, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet. Repeat with another tablespoon of butter and the remaining 2 sandwiches.

Ladle the béchamel sauce over the sandwiches (it will run down the sides), and then top with the Parmigiano-Reggiano.
Broil until bubbling and lightly browned,
3 to 4 minutes.

**Meanwhile,** in a 10-inch nonstick skillet, melt the remaining 1 Tbs. butter over medium heat. Crack the eggs into the skillet and fry them sunny side up until the whites are set but the yolks are still runny, 3 to 4 minutes.

**Use a large, flat spatula** to transfer the sandwiches to serving plates. Place a fried egg on each. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve.





# ham lo mein with shiitake and snow peas

Look for fresh Chinese egg noodles at Asian markets or in the produce section of the supermarket (near the wonton wrappers and tofu).

#### Serves 4

- 8 dried shiitake mushrooms (% oz.)
- 34 lb. fresh Chinese egg noodles
- 3 Tbs. soy sauce
- 1/2 Tbs. Asian sesame oil
- 3 Tbs. peanut oil
- 4 medium scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced (½ cup)
- 3 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
- ½ lb. leftover roasted fresh ham (recipe on p. 76), any seasonings removed, cut into thin strips (2 cups)
- 6 oz. snow peas, trimmed and thinly sliced lengthwise (2½ cups)

- 1 medium red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and thinly sliced (2 cups)
- 1 Tbs. oyster sauce
- 1 Tbs. Chinese chile or chile-garlic paste

Rinse the mushrooms; then soak them in a small bowl in ¾ cup boiling hot water until softened, 20 to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a 4-quart saucepan, bring about 2 quarts of water to a boil over high heat. Boil the noodles until barely tender, about 2 minutes. Drain, toss with 1 Tbs. of the soy sauce and the sesame oil, and spread on a baking sheet.

When the mushrooms are soft, pluck them from the water and squeeze them dry (reserve the soaking liquid). Trim off the stems and thinly slice the caps.

**Heat a wok** or wok pan over medium-high heat for a couple of minutes and then swirl in the peanut oil. Add the scallions, garlic, and ginger; stir-fry for 30 seconds.

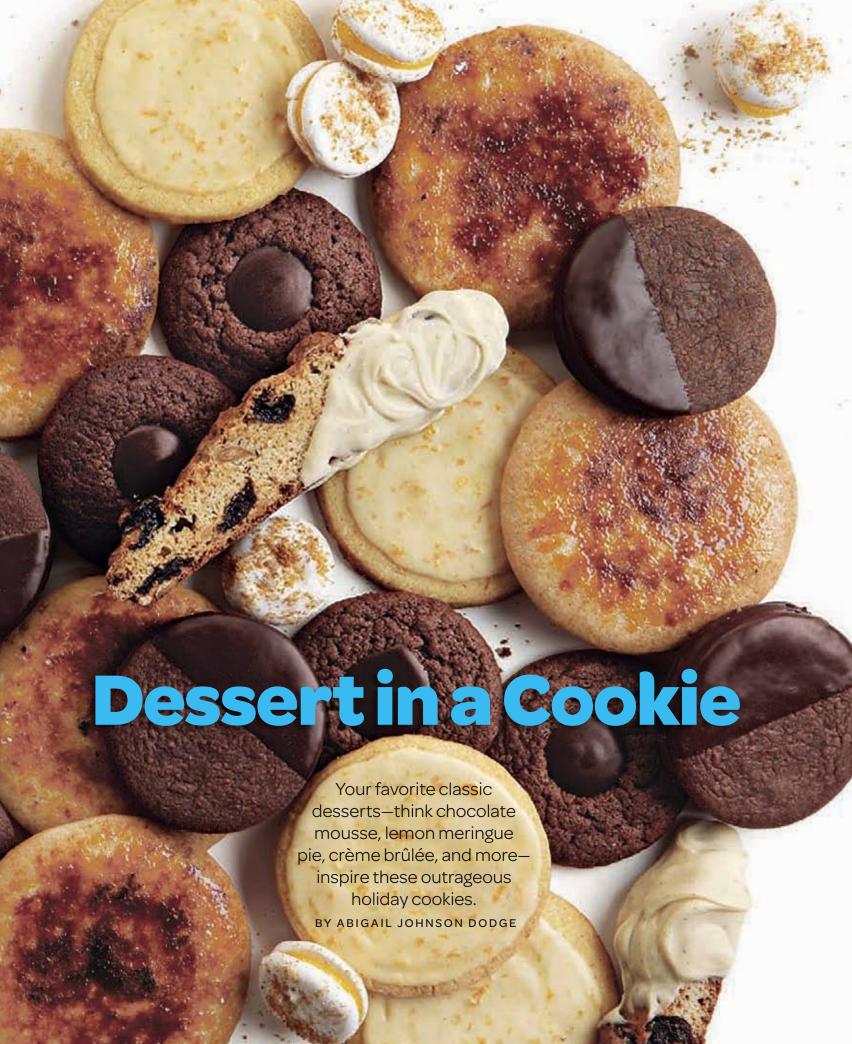
**Add the ham,** snow peas, bell pepper, and mushrooms. Stir-fry until the bell pepper strips begin to soften, 2 minutes.

Add the reserved soaking liquid, the remaining 2 Tbs. soy sauce, the oyster sauce, and chile paste. Cook until the sauce bubbles, about 1 minute.

**Add the cooked noodles** and toss until most of the sauce has been absorbed, less than a minute. Serve immediately.

Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough are the authors of more than 20 cookbooks, including Ham: An Obsession with the Hindquarter. □





INSPIRATION: sacher torte

# chocolate-dipped chocolate-apricot sandwich cookies

The Sacher torte—chocolate sponge cake layered with apricot jam and covered in dark chocolate icing—becomes cakey cookies filled with preserves and dipped in bittersweet chocolate.

Yields about 3 dozen sandwich cookies

#### FOR THE COOKIES

- 9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. table salt
- 8 oz. (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 8 oz. (2 cups) confectioners' sugar
- 21/4 oz. (3/4 cup) unsweetened, natural cocoa powder, sifted if lumpy
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

#### FOR THE FILLING AND GLAZE

- 1 cup apricot preserves
- 12 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. canola or vegetable oil

#### MAKE THE COOKIES

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, and cocoa powder on low speed until blended; then raise the speed to medium and beat until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Scrape down the bowl and beater. Add the egg yolks and vanilla and mix on medium speed until well blended, about 1 minute. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until the dough comes together, about 1 minute.

> Turn the dough out onto a work surface and divide into 3 equal piles on pieces of plastic wrap. Using the plastic as an aid, gently shape each one into a smooth, flat 5-inch disk and wrap in the plastic. Refrigerate until chilled, about 30 minutes. (The dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month.) Position a rack in the center

of the oven and heat the oven to

375°F. Line 2 cookie sheets with parchment or nonstick baking liners.

Working with one disk at a time, roll the dough between two sheets of lightly floured parchment or on a floured work surface until 1/8 to 3/16 inch thick. Dust with additional flour as needed. Using a 21/4-inch cookie cutter, cut out shapes. Arrange about 1 inch apart on the lined cookie sheets. Stack the scraps and gently press them together. Re-roll and cut. Repeat with remaining dough disks.

Bake, one sheet at a time, until the cookies look dry and slightly cracked and feel somewhat firm when pressed, 7 to 9 minutes. Let cool on the sheet for about 5 minutes and then transfer to a rack to cool completely. (The cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days or frozen for up to 1 month before filling and glazing.)

#### **FILL THE COOKIES**

Press the preserves through a fine sieve, discarding any large pieces of apricot. Arrange half of the cookies bottom side up on a work surface. Put 1 tsp. of the preserves in the center of each cookie. Cover each with one of the remaining cookies, bottom side down. Gently squeeze each cookie together to spread the preserves until it just reaches the edges.

#### **GLAZE THE COOKIES**

Line 2 or 3 baking sheets with parchment, aluminum foil, or waxed paper. Put the chocolate and oil in a small, deep, heatproof bowl. Heat in a microwave until almost melted, or set the bowl in a skillet of barely simmering water and stir until melted and smooth.

Dip each cookie halfway into the glaze until lightly covered. Lift the cookie out and gently scrape the bottom against the side of the bowl to remove excess glaze. Set on the prepared baking sheets. Let the cookies sit at room temperature or in the refrigerator until the glaze is firm. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.

Photographs by Scott Phillips



### INSPIRATION: crêpes suzette

# orange butter cookies with grand marnier glaze

Citrus cookies with a Grand Marnier glaze take their cue from the classic dessert of flambéed crêpes and boozy orange sauce.

Yields about 3 dozen cookies

#### FOR THE COOKIES

- 10½ oz. (2½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
  - ½ tsp. table salt
  - 1/4 tsp. baking powder
  - 8 oz. (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
  - 1 cup granulated sugar
  - 2 Tbs. finely grated orange zest
  - 3 large egg yolks
  - 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

#### FOR THE GRAND MARNIER GLAZE

- 4 oz. (1 cup) confectioners' sugar
- 2 Tbs. Grand Marnier
- 1½ Tbs. heavy cream; more as needed
- 2 tsp. finely grated orange zest Pinch of table salt

#### MAKE THE COOKIES

In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, salt, and baking powder.

**In a stand mixer** fitted with the paddle

attachment, beat the butter, sugar, and zest on medium speed until well blended, about 2 minutes. Add the egg yolks one at a time, mixing until blended after each addition. Add the vanilla extract along with the last yolk. Mix until well blended, about 1 minute. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until moist clumps form, about 1 minute.

**Turn the dough out** onto a work surface and divide into 2 equal piles on sheets of plastic wrap. Using the plastic as an aid, knead into a smooth dough, shape into flat 5-inch disks, and wrap in the plastic. Refrigerate until chilled, about 30 minutes. (The dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month.)

**Position a rack** in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 or more cookie sheets with parchment or nonstick baking liners.

Working with one disk at a time, roll the dough between lightly floured parchment or on a floured surface to about ¼ inch thick. Dust with additional flour as needed. Using a 2½-inch cookie cutter, cut out shapes. Arrange them about 1 inch apart

on the cookie sheets. Gather, re-roll, and cut the dough scraps up to 2 more times. **Bake, one sheet at a time,** until the edges are golden-brown, 9 to 13 minutes. Let the cookies cool on the sheet about 5 minutes and then transfer them to a rack to cool completely. (The unglazed cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days or frozen for up to 1 month before glazing.)

#### **GLAZE THE COOKIES**

In a medium bowl, combine the confectioners' sugar, Grand Marnier, cream, zest, and salt. Mix until well blended and smooth. If necessary, add more cream a few drops at a time for a thin, spreadable consistency.

**Top each cookie** with about ½ tsp. of the glaze, using the bottom of the measuring spoon to spread the glaze to within ¼ inch of the edge.

Let sit at room temperature until the glaze is set, about 2 hours. Serve the cookies immediately or store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

# [ INSPIRATION: cherries jubilee ]

# dried cherry and almond biscotti with white chocolate

Here, cherries jubilee—sweet cherries in a spiked syrup over vanilla ice cream—becomes biscotti with dried cherries, toasted almonds, and white chocolate.

#### Yields about 3 dozen cookies

- oz. (2½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour; more as needed
  - 1 cup granulated sugar
- 13/4 tsp. baking powder
- 34 tsp. table salt
- 9 oz. (1¾ cups) dried cherries
- 3 oz. (% cup) slivered almonds, toasted
- 3 large eggs
- 3 Tbs. kirsch or brandy
- 1/2 tsp. pure almond extract
- 14 to 16 oz. white chocolate, chopped

**Position a rack** in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment or a nonstick baking liner.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt on medium-low speed until well blended. On low speed, mix in the cherries and almonds. In a small bowl, whisk the eggs, kirsch, and almond extract. Slowly pour in the egg mixture. Mix until the dough comes together in large, moist clumps, about 1 minute.

**Turn the dough out** onto a lightly floured surface and knead to incorporate any remaining dry ingredients. Divide into 2 equal piles. Shape each pile into a log 10 inches long and about 4 inches wide, lightly flouring your hands as needed (the dough will be sticky).

**Position the logs** on the cookie sheet about 4 inches apart. Bake until the tops are cracked and spring back slightly when pressed, 32 to 36 minutes. Transfer the sheet to a rack and leave until the logs are cool enough to handle, about 10 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 300°F.

Carefully peel the logs from the parchment and transfer to a cutting board. Using a serrated knife, cut each log on a sharp angle into ½-inch-thick slices. Return the slices to the cookie sheet and arrange them cut side down. It's OK if they touch because they won't spread.

Bake until the biscotti are dried to your taste, 10 minutes (for slightly moist) to 20 minutes (for super-dry and crunchy), turning them over halfway through baking. Transfer the cookie sheet to a rack and let the biscotti cool completely. They will still give slightly when pressed but will harden as they cool.

When the biscotti are cool, melt the white chocolate in a microwave or in a heatproof bowl set in a skillet of barely simmering water. Dip one end of each biscotti in the chocolate and place on a baking sheet lined with fresh parchment until set, about 30 minutes. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks or freeze for up to 1 month.

## INSPIRATION: chocolate mousse

# double dark chocolate thumbprints

Like any good mousse, these cookies are all about the chocolate. The dough has both cocoa and bittersweet chocolate, and the ganache filling is rich and dark.

#### Yields about 4 dozen cookies

#### FOR THE COOKIES

- 6 oz. (1½ cups) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. table salt
- ½ tsp. baking powder
  - 14 tsp. baking soda
    - 4 oz. (½ cup) unsalted butter, softened
      - 1⅓ cups granulated sugar
      - 1½ oz. (½ cup) natural, unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted if lumpy
      - 3 large eggs
      - 3/4 tsp. pure vanilla extract
      - 3 oz. bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

#### FOR THE CHOCOLATE FILLING

- 3 oz. bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped (½ cup)
- 2 oz. (4 Tbs.) unsalted butter, cut into 3 pieces

#### MAKE THE COOKIES

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line 3 cookie sheets with parchment or nonstick baking liners. **In a medium bowl**, whisk the flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, and cocoa powder on medium speed until well blended, about 2 minutes. Scrape down the bowl and the beater. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing until blended after each addition, about 30 seconds, and adding the vanilla along with the last egg. Continue mixing on medium speed until well blended, about 1 minute. Add the cooled, melted chocolate and mix until just blended, about 30 seconds. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until well blended, about 1 minute.

**Using 2 tablespoon measures** or a mini ice cream scoop, drop tablespoons of dough about 1½ inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake, one sheet at a time, until the cookies are puffed and the tops are cracked and look dry, 11 to 13 minutes. When the cookies are just

out of the oven, use the rounded side of a half-teaspoon measure or the end of a thick-handled wooden spoon to make a small, deep well in the center of each cookie. Let the cookies sit on the cookie sheet for 5 minutes and then transfer them to a rack to cool completely. (At this point, you can fill the cookies immediately, or store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days, or freeze for up to 1 month before filling.)

#### MAKE THE FILLING

Melt the chocolate and butter in the microwave or in a medium bowl set in a skillet of barely simmering water, stirring with a rubber spatula until smooth. Remove from the heat and set aside until cool and slightly thickened.

#### **FILL THE COOKIES**

Spoon the chocolate mixture into the wells of the cooled cookies. Set aside until the chocolate firms up, about 1 hour. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days.

### [ INSPIRATION: crème brûlée ]

# burnt-sugar vanilla butter cookies

Bursting with vanilla flavor, these cookies sport the burnt-sugar topping of their inspiration.

#### Yields 31/2 dozen cookies

- 3 cups (13½ oz.) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. table salt
- 8 oz. (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 1½ cups plus ½ cup granulated sugar Seeds scraped from 2 large vanilla beans or 4 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs plus 2 large egg yolks

**In a medium bowl,** whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Add

1½ cups of the sugar and the vanilla seeds or extract and beat on medium speed until well blended, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs and yolks one at a time, mixing until blended after each addition. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until just blended, about 1 minute.

**Turn the dough out** onto a large piece of plastic wrap. Using the plastic as an aid, gently knead into a smooth dough (the dough will be soft). Shape into a 12-inch round log about 3 inches in diameter and wrap in the plastic. Cut an empty paper towel roll open. Gently rest the dough in the roll and refrigerate until chilled and very firm, about 4 hours. (The dough may be refrigerated for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month.)

**Position a rack** in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 or more cookie sheets with parchment or nonstick baking liners. Put the remaining ½ cup sugar in a small bowl.

Cut the dough into slices about 1/4 inch thick. Gently press one side of each cookie into the sugar to coat completely. Arrange the cookies sugar side up about 1 inch apart on the lined cookie sheets. Save the rest of the sugar for decorating the cookies. Bake, one sheet at a time, until golden-brown, 11 to 14 minutes. Let the cookies cool on the sheet for about 5 minutes and then transfer them to a rack to cool completely. (The cookies can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up 3 days before proceeding.)

Dip the sugared side of the cookies into the remaining sugar. Arrange the cookies sugar side up on a flameproof work surface. Pass the flame of a small kitchen torch over the cookie tops until evenly caramelized. Let cool completely, about 3 minutes, before serving.



Crisp meringue buttons (the meringue) are sprinkled with gingersnap crumbs (the piecrust) and sandwiched around a vibrant lemon curd (the filling).

Yields 40 sandwich cookies

#### FOR THE MERINGUES

- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2% oz. (% cup) confectioners' sugar Pinch table salt
  - 2 large egg whites, at room temperature
- 14 tsp. cream of tartar
- 14 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 14 tsp. pure lemon extract
- 1 oz. (¼ cup) finely crushed gingersnap cookies

#### FOR THE LEMON CURD

- 3 oz. (6 Tbs.) unsalted butter
  - 1/2 cup granulated sugar
  - √s cup fresh lemon juice (from 1½ large lemons)
    - 2 Tbs. finely grated lemon zest (from 1 large lemon) Pinch of table salt
    - 6 large egg yolks

#### MAKE THE MERINGUES

Position racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven and heat the oven to 175°F. Line 2 large heavy-duty baking sheets with parchment.

**In a food processor,** process the sugar until very fine, about 45 seconds. Add the confectioners' sugar and salt and pulse until well blended, about 15 seconds.

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, combine the egg whites and cream of tartar. Begin mixing on medium-low speed until frothy. Increase the speed to medium high and beat until the whites form soft peaks, about 2 minutes. Continue beating while gradually sprinkling in the sugar mixture. When all the sugar is added, increase the speed to high and whip until firm, glossy peaks form, about 10 minutes. Add the vanilla and lemon extracts and beat just until blended, about 10 seconds.

Spoon the meringue into a large pastry bag fitted with a plain 3/2-inch tip (Ateco #3). Holding the pastry bag perpendicular to a lined baking sheet, pipe small flat disks about 11/4 inches in diameter and no higher than 11/4 inch, spaced about 11/2 inch apart. As you pipe, keep the tip down into the meringue

and let it spread out rather than lifting the tip up. If necessary, you can help the meringue spread by circling the tip in the meringue as you pipe. Sprinkle the crushed cookies evenly over the tops of the meringues. Don't worry if the extra crumbs fall off. Using a fingertip, lightly press down on the crumbs to flatten any meringue peaks.

Bake the meringues until dried and crisp but not browned, about 2½ hours. Turn off the oven and leave the door shut; let the meringues sit in the oven until cool, about 2 hours. Remove from the oven and gently lift the meringues off the parchment. (At this point, you can assemble the cookies or store the meringues in an airtight container for up to 1 month.)

#### MAKE THE LEMON CURD

Melt the butter in a 4-quart saucepan over medium heat. Remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the sugar, lemon juice, zest, and salt. Whisk in the yolks until well blended. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, until the mixture is thick enough to coat a spatula and hold a line drawn through it with a finger, 4 to 6 minutes. Don't let the mixture boil.

**Strain the curd** into a clean bowl and cover with plastic wrap, pressing the plastic onto the surface to keep a skin from forming. Let cool at room temperature; then refrigerate until chilled. (The curd will keep for up to 3 weeks.)

#### ASSEMBLE THE COOKIES

Arrange half of the meringues bottom side up on a work surface. Put the chilled curd in a piping bag fitted with a plain %-inch tip (Ateco #7) and pipe about 1 tsp. of curd onto each meringue. Gently press the remaining meringues bottom side down onto the curd. The filled cookies can be prepared and kept at room temperature up to 1 hour before serving. The longer they sit, the softer the meringues become.

Abby Dodge is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. Her most recent cookbook, Desserts 4 Today: Flavorful Desserts with Just Four Ingredients, was published in September. □



See videos of Abby Dodge making three more simple holiday cookies at FineCooking.com/extras.

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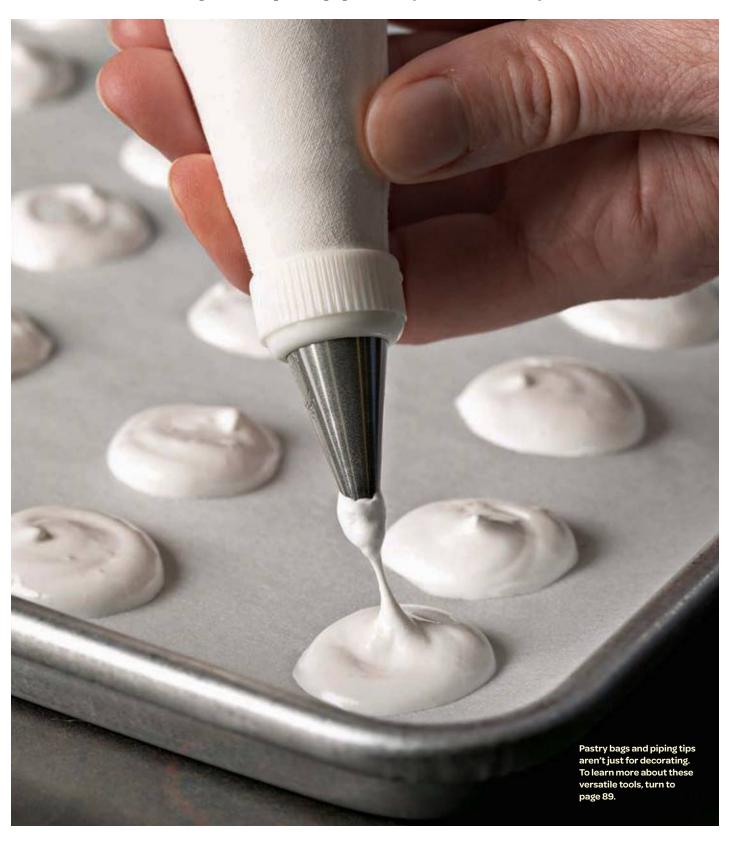


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# **TEST KITCHEN**

Tips/Techniques/Equipment/Ingredients/Glossary







OVERCOOKED

PROPERLY COOKED

NATIVE TO NORTH AMERICA, wild rice is the seed of several species of aquatic grass. Despite its name, wild rice isn't directly related to Asian types of rice, and these days, it's as likely to be cultivated as harvested from the wild. High in protein and

fiber, wild rice has a firm texture and a nutty flavor that make it a favorite ingredient in stuffings and side dishes, like the Wild Rice with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans on page 64. It's available in three grades: best-quality, very long-grain giant; medium-grain fancy; and short-grain select.

To cook wild rice, simmer it in lots of salted water or broth,

but be careful not to overcook it. Properly cooked wild rice grains (bottom left) should look swollen but not broken. They should remain a bit firm on the outside, but feel tender to the bite on the inside.

Burst grains (top left) are a sign of overcooking. —Jennifer Armentrout



# Beef Wellington game plan

There are several components to a Beef Wellington (page 56), but you don't have to make them all in one day. Here's how we broke up the cooking while testing the recipe:

#### 2 days (or up to 2 months) ahead

Make and chill (or freeze) the beef stock, duxelles, and puff pastry (recipe at FineCooking .com/extras).

#### 1 day ahead

Begin the Madeira sauce. Make the crêpes. Defrost the beef stock duxelles, and puff pastry, if necessary.

#### Up to 5 hours ahead

Let the beef sit out at room temperature for 1 hour before searing.

#### Up to 4 hours ahead

Sear the beef; assemble and chill the Wellington.

#### Up to 11/2 hours ahead

Let the Wellington sit out at room temperature before baking.

#### Up to 1 hour ahead

Bake the Wellington and let it rest before carving.

#### **Before serving**

Finish the Madeira sauce.

-J.A.



Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Jennifer Armentrout, except ham carving by Samantha Seneviratne

#### EQUIPMENT

# Pastry bags and piping tips

A PASTRY BAG AND A FEW PIPING TIPS come in handy for more than just cake decorating—like piping potatoes over a shepherd's pie or stuffing baked goods with fillings. In this issue alone, we're using

them to make Rosemary-Lemon Tartlets with Pine Nut Shortbread (page 53), Lemon-Gingersnap Mini Meringues (page 85), and a Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream (page 48).

#### Types of pastry bags

Pastry bags are made from various materials—each with different pros and cons—and are available in lengths ranging from 7 to 24 inches.

Canvas bags are great for working with stiff doughs and purées, but they're difficult to keep clean.

Plastic-lined cloth bags can manage the heavy-duty tasks, too, and the plastic lining makes them far easier to clean.

Nylon bags are supple, comfortable to use, and easy to clean, but they can become slippery with use and tend to be less durable than cloth bags.

Disposable plastic bags make for the easiest clean-up since you toss them when you're done. But that also makes them wasteful, and ultimately, expensive.

The ideal scenario is to have two or more types and sizes of pastry bags and tailor your choice to the task at hand. But if you'd rather have one all-purpose bag, choose a 14- to 16-inch plastic-lined cloth bag. Any larger and you'll struggle to handle it; any smaller and you'll need to refill constantly.

#### Types of piping tips



These are made of plastic or metal and come in a mind-boggling number of shapes and sizes for piping everything from leaves to basketweave patterns, but plain tips (near left) and star tips (middle left) are the most commonly used.

Choosing tips can be confusing because there's no standardized sizing system. Some manufacturers stamp the size on the side of the tip. For example, the number 4 may indicate a 4-mm tip, but it may also just refer to a catalog number and have nothing to do with size. When in doubt, measure the tip's opening to be sure.

You can buy tips individuallly or in sets. You may also want a plastic coupler (far left), a two-part gadget that lets you switch tips without emptying the bag. See Where to Buy It, page 93, for a source.

#### Care and keeping

Handwash bags and tips immediately after use with warm soapy water. If a bag has a loop, hang it to dry. Otherwise, stand it tip side up to dry. Towel-dry tips, then allow them to air-dry. If stored before thoroughly dry, bags may mold and tips may rust, and then they must be discarded.

# How to use a pastry bag



into the bag (cut the end of the bag to accommodate it as necessary); then fit the tip onto the coupler from the outside of the bag and secure with the coupler ring. If not using a coupler, simply fit the tip into the bag.



If using a coupler, fit the funnel-like part Fold down the top of the bag over your hand, like a cuff. Use a spatula to fill the bag about half full. Don't overfill or it will be hard to handle.



Twist the bag closed until all of the air is purged from the bag and the filling is forced into the tip.



To pipe, position your nondominant hand near the tip and use it to guide the tip as you squeeze the filling out with pressure at the top of the bag from your dominant hand. As you pipe, frequently twist the top of the bag to keep it tight around the filling.

# GLOSSARY Anatomy of a citrus peel If you're new to cooking, terms like zest and pith might be

unfamiliar to you. They refer to parts of a citrus peel.

The zest is the thin, colorful outer layer of the peel. Full of aromatic oils, it packs loads of flavor. In the case of sour citrus, like lemons and limes, the zest provides a nonacidic version of the fruit's flavor, useful for baked goods and other instances where sourness isn't wanted.

The pith is the thicker, spongy white layer. It's very bitter, which is why recipes often suggest avoiding as much of it as possible when removing the zest. The Candied Citrus Peel recipe on page 20 is an exception—in this case, the bitterness of the pith is a welcome counterbalance to the high amount of sugar in the recipe.

PITH

ZEST

#### **TECHNIQUE**

# How to assemble a croquembouche

A CROQUEMBOUCHE, like the one on page 48, may look like an elaborate dessert, but it's actually not that difficult to assemble once you get the hang of it. Just be cautious as you work with the caramel;

it's extremely hot and burns on contact. Have a small bowl of ice water nearby, and if you get any on your fingers, immediately dip them into the water to stop the burn.



Put the foil-wrapped cone on a serving platter. Insert a toothpick about 1 inch from the base of the cone. Dip the side of a large cream puff into the hot caramel to coat the side and about a third of the top of the puff.



Immediately press the cream puff onto the toothpick, with the top facing out. Insert another toothpick parallel to the first pick, positioning it so that the next puff will fit snugly against its neighbor. Dip another cream puff and nestle it against the first. Repeat, making your way up and around the cone, working from the largest to the smallest puffs.



As the caramel cools and thickens, it will begin to spin into long, thin threads as you pull the puffs from the pot. Before attaching the puff, circle the cone with the puff so the spun caramel drapes the croquembouche. When the caramel becomes too thick to dip, swirl it over low heat to thin it-it will darken a little each time you do this.



When the cone is completely covered with puffs, dip a fork into the caramel and continue to pull the caramel threads from the pot and spin them around the croquembouche until you're happy with its appearance.



#### INGREDIENT

# Chipotles in adobo

A can of chipotles (smoke-dried jalapeños) in adobo (a spiced tomato sauce) is a convenient ingredient for adding smoky flavor and spicy heat to recipes like the Chipotle Black Bean Dip on page 41. But a little chipotle in adobo goes a long way, so here are a few ideas for how to use it all.

Start by puréeing the chiles in their sauce—this makes them easier to portion and store. The purée freezes well, too, so if you can't use it within a week or so, divide small amounts into an ice cube tray, freeze into cubes, and then transfer to a zip-top bag for longer storage—the cubes should keep for about 6 months.

#### Chipotle and honey glazed roast

**chicken** Combine honey with chipotle purée, salt, and pepper. Brush a whole chicken with the mixture and then roast at 425°F.

#### Chipotle-Cheddar twice-baked

potatoes Bake russet potatoes until tender. Halve and scoop out the flesh. Mash the flesh slightly, then mix in chipotle purée, butter, sour cream, grated Cheddar, chopped chives, salt, and pepper. Stuff the filling back into the skins and bake at 375°F until heated through.

#### Romaine salad with chipotle ranch

dressing Mix mayonnaise, buttermilk, chipotle purée, chopped cilantro, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Toss the dressing with chopped romaine lettuce and thinly sliced red onion. Top with croutons.

#### Butternut squash and chipotle soup

Sauté chopped onion, carrot, celery, and a pinch of salt in oil over medium heat until tender. Add diced butternut squash, a sprig of thyme, a bay leaf, and enough chicken broth to cover by 1 inch. Simmer until the squash is tender. Discard the thyme and bay leaf, and purée the soup until smooth. Combine heavy cream and chipotle purée; stir into the soup, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

—Melissa Pellegrino and Samantha Seneviratne



#### TECHNIQUE

# How to carve a ham

THE FRESH HAM with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon on page 76 is an impressive-looking roast, so you'll want to carve it at the table for the maximum wow-factor. Here's how to tackle it:



Put the ham on a carving board,

positioning it on its widest side for stability. Start at the large end and use a long, sharp carving knife to cut thin slices perpendicular to the bone.



After cutting several slices, run

the knife parallel to the bone to cut them free. Finish carving that section of the ham and then turn it and slice another side. Repeat.

—Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough

#### GLOSSARY

## Pâte à choux

Pâte à choux (pronounced paht ah shoo) is a moist, smooth pastry dough made of butter, flour, water, eggs, salt, and sometimes sugar. It's piped into various shapes to make cream puffs (like those for the croquembouche on page 48), profiteroles, eclairs, and gougères (cheese puffs), among other delicacies. During baking, the high moisture content in the dough produces steam, which leavens and creates large, airy pockets inside the puffs. The name pâte à choux, which translates to "cabbage dough," reflects the cabbage-like appearance of the baked puffs. -J.A.

For sources, see Where to Buy It FINECOOKING.COM 91





TIP

# Make your own brown sugar

THE NEXT TIME YOU RUN OUT of brown sugar, check your pantry again before you head to the store—if you have granulated white sugar and molasses, you have the makings of brown sugar.

For every cup of brown sugar needed, add 1 Tbs. molasses for light brown or 2 Tbs. for dark brown to 1 cup of granulated sugar. Combine with an electric mixer on medium-low to medium-high speed (start slowly and gradually increase the speed) until the molasses is incorporated and the mixture becomes fluffy brown sugar. This may take as long as 10 minutes—just keep at it until most of the molasses balls are blended in.







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From surlatable.com, 800-243-0852:

- 2-inch flared tartlet forms, \$2 each.
- 2-inch Gobel nonstick tartlet molds, \$3 each.

From Aero Studios, 419 Broome St., New York, New York, 212-966-1500:

• **Stemmed Champagne glasses**, designed by Thomas O'Brien, \$40 to \$45 each.

Flared tartlet

molds

- Darby Collection stainless-steel ice bucket, \$100.
- Filigree ring tray, \$135.

From Treillage, Ltd., 1015 Lexington Ave., New York, New York, 212-988-8800:

- $\bullet$  Antique silver mini star hurricane, \$225.
- Golden Berry Champagne flutes, \$90 for a set of six.
- Mosaic Lake cocktail napkins, \$35 for a set of four.

From westelm.com, 888-922-4119:

- Organic-shaped dinnerware, \$12 to \$28.
- Lacquer nut bowls, \$4 each.
- Leaf-shaped entertaining bowls, \$6 each.

By Iittala, available at etabletop.com, 212-251-0621:

- Aarne Champagne flutes, \$50 for two.
- Ultima Thule glass bowls, \$70 to \$132.
- Essence Champagne glasses, \$40 for two.

#### test kitchen, page 87

- 1-tablespoon Zeroll EZ disher food/ice cream scoop, size 50, \$16.50, bakedeco.com, 800-525-5556.
- Pastry bags, tips, and couplers, 95¢ to \$20, kitchenconser vatory.com, 866-862-2433.

#### tortellini, page 66

From murrayscheese.com, 212-243-3289:

- Mortadella, \$5.99 for 6 ounces.
- Prosciutto di Parma, \$12.99 for 4 ounces.

# beef wellington, page 54

- 8-ounce soufflé cup, \$4.50 each, kitchenconservatory.com, 866-862-2433.
- Cuisinart 8-quart hard-anodized stockpot, \$100, chefscatalog.com, 800-338-3232.
- All-Clad 10-inch stainless-steel fry pan, \$115, williams-sonoma.com, 877-812-6235.
- French 20-inch rolling pin with tapered ends, \$6.99, fantes.com, 800-443-2683.
- Heavy-duty half-sheet pan, \$7.70, bakedeco.com, 800-525-5556.
- 24x16-inch Meat Lover's carving board, \$89, jkadams.com, 800-451-6118.

# The following state of the second state of the

#### repertoire, page 38

- India Tree dark muscovado sugar, \$7 for 1 pound; deandeluca.com, 800-221-7714.
- Basting/pastry brush, \$15.99 for three-piece set, chefscatalog.com, 800-338-3232.
- 10x14-inch cooling rack, \$4.99, fantes.com, 800-443-2683.
- Mittens wrapping paper, \$6.50 for two 20x30-inch sheets, snowandgraham.com, 866-706-4227.

From crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696:

- Stainless-steel dry measuring cups, \$19.99 for a four-piece set.
- Large French wire whisk, \$10.95.
- Silicone spatula, \$6.95.
- 12-inch Microplane grater/zester, \$15.94.

#### From chefsresource.com, 866-765-2433:

- KitchenAid 9-speed professional hand mixer, \$89.95.
- Cuisinart 2-quart Multiclad Pro saucepan with lid, \$85.

From cooking.com, 800-663-8810:

- Chicago Metallic 8½x4½-inch commercial loaf pan, \$11.95.
- Oxo 2-cup liquid measure, \$7.95.
- RSVP International measuring spoons, \$12.95 for a six-piece set.
- Trudeau plastic mixing bowls with pour spout, \$16.95 for a three-piece set.



#### pears, page 60

• Location courtesy of Averill Farm, Washington Depot, Connecticut, 860-868-2777, averillfarm.com.

#### yogurt, page 22

 Chef's Choice Belgian WafflePro waffle iron, \$179.95, cooking.com, 800-663-8810.



EDITION'S LETTER, P. 6   Series   Color   Co	Recipes	Calories	Fat Cal	Protein				Mono Fat		Chol	Sodium		
Shelfish with Pennel, Escarole, and Kale   920   140   27   10   18   5   7   2   125   800   2   126ANA, P. 15   126ANA, P. 1		(ксаі)	(ксаі)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(8)	(mg)	(mg)	(8)	
JICANAP, P. 15   15   15   15   15   15   15   15	·						_	_					
		290	140	2/	10	16	5	/	2	125	800	2	
CITRUS, P.20 Candied Citrus Reel SS 0 0 0 9 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 VOGURT, P.22 Carrot and Leek Scop with Herbard Croutons SS00 270 59 11 300 8 125 5 3.5 50 325 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	• • • •							_	_			_	
Candided Circle Pierl   York   Variable   York		170	100	4	14	11	3.5	2	5	15	360	5	
YOGURT, P.22   Spiced Yogur Waffles with Tileasted-Pacan Maple Syrup   330   100   6   52   11   25   5   3.5   50   280   2   2   2   2   2   2   2   2   2	·		_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	
Spiced Kyapirt Waffles with Disasted-Recan Maple Syrup		35	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Carrota nat Leek Soup with Herbed Croutans													
MarkEr   TOMICHT, P.24   Seared Scalelops with Cauliflower, Brown Butter, and Basil   300   150   21   8   17   5   9   15   55   270   2   Turker, Cutters and Black Bears with Holio Sauce   410   160   39   32   18   25   13   2   95   210   5   Turker, Cutters and Black Bears with Holio Sauce   410   160   39   32   18   25   13   2   95   210   5   Turker, Cutters and Black Bears with Holio Sauce   410   160   39   3   4   15   25   10   15   0   300   15   Cannellini Beans with Lemon, Roasted Red Peppers, and Bacon   200   70   8   23   8   15   45   15   5   460   6   Pans-Seared Chicken Thighs with Bears and Grainly Mutstard Sauce   26   240   32   9   27   9   10   5   12   480   11   Cavatappi with Artcholoses and Three Cheeses   720   190   300   103   22   35   13   35   30   2590   10   Pattachio-Crusted Lamb Chops   300   170   19   15   19   35   10   35   45   320   22   Parts Plutanesca   720   190   30   103   22   35   13   35   30   2590   10   Pattachio-Crusted Lamb Chops   300   170   19   15   19   35   10   35   45   320   22   Patter Thicken   300   3	, , ,												
MAKE IT TONIGHT, P. 24   Secret Scale (Sace)   Secret Scale (Sac	·												
Seared Scalegos with Cauliflower, Brown Butter, and Bapil   300   150   21   8   17   5   9   15   55   270   2	5	530	270	59	1	30	8	12	6	190	520	0	
Turkey Cutlets and Black Beans with Mojo Sauce Mushroom Salad with Lemon, Thyme, and Parmigiano 160 180 180 180 180 180 180 180 180 180 18	MAKE IT TONIGHT, P. 24												
Mushroom Salad with Lemon, Thyme, and Parnigiano   160   130   3   4   15   2.5   10   15   0   300   1	Seared Scallops with Cauliflower, Brown Butter, and Basil		150	21		17							
Cannellini Beans with Lemon, Roasted Red Peppers, and Bacon	Turkey Cutlets and Black Beans with Mojo Sauce					18							
Pan-Seared Chicken Thighs with Beer and Grainy Mustard Sauce   420   240   32   9   27   9   10   5   125   480   1   Cavatappi with Artichokes and Three Cheeses   650   270   22   74   30   15   8   15   65   730   8   15   730   25   8   15   65   730   16   730   720   7	Mushroom Salad with Lemon, Thyme, and Parmigiano	160	130	3	4	15	2.5	10	1.5	0	300	1	
Cavatappy with Artichokes and Three Cheeses	Cannellini Beans with Lemon, Roasted Red Peppers, and Bacon	200	70	8	23	8	1.5	4.5	1.5	5	460	6	
Pasta Puttanesca   720   190   30   103   22   3.5   13   3.5   30   2590   10   Pistachic-Crusted Lamb Chops   300   170   19   15   19   3.5   10   3.5   45   320   2   Pistachic-Crusted Lamb Chops   300   170   19   15   19   3.5   10   3.5   45   320   2   Pastagrafian Chopped Liver (per I Tbs)   50   40   1   3   4.5   1.5   1   2   15   70   1   PSUITCAKE, P.38  Spiced Rum Fruitcake   400   120   4   59   13   8   3.5   0.5   95   95   3   GOODLIFE, P.40   40   40   4   12   4.5   0.5   3.5   0   0   120   2   Chipotle Black Bean Dip   100   40   4   12   4.5   0.5   3.5   0   0   120   3   Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip   80   50   2   5   6   2   3   0   10   190   1   CHAMPAGNE AND DESSERT PARTY, P. 44  Popcorn with Sweet Butter and Sea Salt   140   80   2   13   10   3   3.5   3   10   300   2   2   Estitesweet Chocalea Bark with Hannolds   240   120   5   27   14   5   7   1.5   0   65   4   Apple, Fennel, and Cheddar Cheese Straws (per piece)   120   50   3   15   5   3   1.5   0   60   160   10   Estersweet Chocalea Bark with Pine Nut Shortbread   100   60   1   9   6   3.5   2   0.5   45   25   0   ESEE WELLINGTON, P.54  Classic Beard Wellington   850   450   48   84   50   2   20   20   5   20   900   2   Chicken Liver Pâté (per 1 Tbs)   70   50   3   0   6   3   1.5   0   75   45   0   EARS, P. 60  WEAR AND DESSERT PARTY (P. 44   70   120   14   49   14   3.5   7   2.5   15   680   6   Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.)   45   5   0   8   20   20   20   5   20   900   2   Chicken Liver Pâté (per 1 Tbs.)   70   50   8   20   20   20   5   20   900   2   Chicken Liver Pâté (per 1 Tbs.)   70   50   8   20   20   8   16   3   35   590   4   Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.)   45   5   0   8   20   20   8   5   5   1   0   5   5   5   0    TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66  Tortellinien Brodo   240   80   18   22   9   3.5   3.5   1   95   5   5   0   0   PERSH Ham mith Rosemany, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7% oz)   760   490   57   4   54   21   15   0   3   35   10	Pan-Seared Chicken Thighs with Beer and Grainy Mustard Sauce	420	240	32	9	27	9	10	5	125	480	1	
Pistachio-Crusted Lamb Chops	Cavatappi with Artichokes and Three Cheeses	650	270	22	74	30	15	8	1.5	65	730	8	
AFRIT TASTE OF CHRISTMAS, P. 36   S0   40   1   3   4.5   15   1   2   15   70   1	Pasta Puttanesca	720	190	30	103	22	3.5	13	3.5	30	2590	10	
Vegetarian Chopped Liver (per 1 Tbs)	Pistachio-Crusted Lamb Chops	300	170	19	15	19	3.5	10	3.5	45	320	2	
Spiced Rum Fruitciake	A FIRST TASTE OF CHRISTMAS, P. 36												
Spiced Rum Fruitcake   400   120   4   59   13   8   3.5   0.5   95   95   3	Vegetarian Chopped Liver (per 1 Tbs)	50	40	1	3	4.5	1.5	1	2	15	70	1	
Avocado Green Goddess Dip 70 45 2 5 5 1 3.5 0.5 0.5 0 220 2 Chicpiote Black Bean Dip 100 40 4 4 12 4.5 0.5 3.5 0.5 0.5 0 170 3 Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip 80 50 2 5 6 2 3 0 0 10 190 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	FRUITCAKE, P. 38												
Avocado Green Goddess Dip	Spiced Rum Fruitcake	400	120	4	59	13	8	3.5	0.5	95	95	3	
Chipotle Black Bean Dip Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip Roasted Red Red Red Red Red Red Red Red Red R	GOOD LIFE, P. 40												
Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip CHAMPAGNE AND DESSERT PARTY, P. 44 Popcorn with Sweet Butter and Sea Salt 140 80 2 13 10 3 3.5 3 10 300 2 Bittersweet Chocolate Bark with Almonds 240 120 5 27 14 5 7 1.5 0 65 4 Apple, Fennel, and Cheddar Cheese Straws (per piece) 100 50 2 9 6 2 3 0.5 10 240 1 Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream (per piece) 120 50 3 15 5 3 1.5 0 60 160 0 Rosemary-Lemon Tartlets with Pine Nut Shortbread 100 60 1 9 6 3.5 2 0.5 45 25 0 BEEF WELLINGTON, P. 54 Classic Beef Wellington 850 450 48 34 50 20 20 5 290 900 2 Clocken Liver Paté (per 1 Tbs) 70 50 3 0 6 3 15 5 7 2.5 15 680 6 PEARS, P. 60 Wild Rice Salad with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans 370 120 14 49 14 3.5 7 2.5 15 680 6 Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.) 45 5 0 8 20 28 8 16 3 35 590 4 Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per friter) 80 25 1 13 3 3 0 1.5 1 0 5 0 0 TORTELLINIE INBRODO, P. 66 Tortellinie n Brodo 240 80 18 22 9 3.5 3.5 1 95 580 1 FRESH HAM, P. 74 Fresh HAm with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7% oz) 760 490 57 4 54 21 26 4.5 215 680 0 Torque-Madame Sandwiches 840 400 49 52 45 21 15 3 365 1040 4 Ham Lam Alemond Singer (per friter) 5 50 3 23 23 6 2.5 1 0 20 20 85 10 141 6 5 10 0 20 85 1 Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints 90 40 1 11 45 25 15 0 20 45 10 0 30 45 10 0 0 0 0 30 45 10 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	Avocado Green Goddess Dip	70	45	2	5	5	1	3.5	0.5	0	220	2	
CHAMPAGNE AND DESSERT PARTY, P. 44	Chipotle Black Bean Dip	100	40	4	12	4.5	0.5	3.5	0	0	170	3	
Popcorn with Sweet Butter and Sea Salt	Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip	80	50	2	5	6	2	3	0	10	190	1	
Bittersweet Chocolate Bark with Almonds   240   120   5   27   14   5   7   1.5   0   65   4     Apple, Fennel, and Cheddar Cheese Straws (per piece)   100   50   2   9   6   2   3   0.5   10   240   1     Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream (per piece)   120   50   3   15   5   3   1.5   0   60   160   0     Rosemary-Lemon Tartlets with Pine Nut Shortbread   100   60   1   9   6   3.5   2   0.5   45   25   0     BEEF WELLINGTON, P.54	CHAMPAGNE AND DESSERT PARTY, P. 44												
Apple, Fennel, and Cheddar Cheese Straws (per piece) 100 50 2 9 6 2 3 0.5 10 240 1 Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream (per piece) 120 50 3 15 5 3 1.5 0 60 160 0 Rosemary-Lemon Tartiets with Pine Nut Shortbread 100 60 1 9 6 3.5 2 0.5 45 25 0 BEEF WELLINGTON, P. 54	Popcorn with Sweet Butter and Sea Salt	140	80	2	13	10	3	3.5	3	10	300	2	
Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream (per piece) Rosemary-Lemon Tartlets with Pine Nut Shortbread 100 60 11 9 6 3.5 2 0.5 45 25 0  BEEF WELLINGTON, P. 54 Classic Beef Wellington 850 450 48 34 50 20 20 5 290 900 2 Chicken Liver Pâte (per 1 Tbs) 70 50 3 0 6 3 1.5 0 75 45 0  PEARS, P. 60 Wild Rice Salad with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.) 45 5 0 8 0 0 0 0 0 70 1 Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps 360 250 8 20 28 8 16 3 35 590 4 Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter) 80 25 1 1 13 3 0 1.5 1 0 5 0  TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66 Tortellini en Brod  FEESH HAM, P. 74 Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz) Ham and Polenta Spoonbread 330 180 19 16 21 11 6 1 125 400 1 FRESH HAM, P. 74 Fresh Ham with Shittake and Snow Peas 580 210 27 65 24 5 10 6 11 14 15 3 365 10 0 20 85 11  Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints 90 40 1 11 4.5 2.5 1.5 0 20 85 11  Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints 90 40 1 11 4.5 2.5 1.5 0 30 45 0  Eumon-Gingersnap Mini Meringues 50 20 11 7 2.5 1.5 1 0 35 80 0  Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies	Bittersweet Chocolate Bark with Almonds	240	120	5	27	14	5	7	1.5	0	65	4	
Rosemary-Lemon Tartlets with Pine Nut Shortbread   100   60   1   9   6   3.5   2   0.5   45   25   0	Apple, Fennel, and Cheddar Cheese Straws (per piece)	100	50	2	9	6	2	3	0.5	10	240	1	
BEEF WELLINGTON, P. 54   Classic Beef Wellington	Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream (per piece)	120	50	3	15	5	3	1.5	0	60	160	0	
Classic Beef Wellington	Rosemary-Lemon Tartlets with Pine Nut Shortbread	100	60	1	9	6	3.5	2	0.5	45	25	0	
Chicken Liver Pâté (per 1 Tbs) 70 50 3 0 6 3 1.5 0 75 45 0  PEARS, P. 60  Wild Rice Salad with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans 370 120 14 49 14 3.5 7 2.5 15 680 6  Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.) 45 5 0 8 0 0 0 0 0 0 70 1  Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps 360 250 8 20 28 8 16 3 35 590 4  Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter) 80 25 1 13 3 0 1.5 1 0 5 0  TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66  Tortellini en Brodo 240 80 18 22 9 3.5 3.5 1 95 580 1  FRESH HAM, P. 74  Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz) 760 490 57 4 54 21 26 4.5 215 680 0  Ham and Polenta Spoonbread 330 180 19 16 21 11 6 1 125 400 1  Croque-Madame Sandwiches 840 400 49 52 45 21 15 3 365 1040 4  Ham Lo Mein with Shittake and Snow Peas 580 210 27 65 24 5 10 6 110 1410 5  COOKIES, P. 80  Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate 160 50 3 23 6 2.5 1 0 20 45 1  Orange Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze 120 50 1 16 6 3.5 1.5 0 30 80 0  Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies 110 45 1 16 5 3 1.5 0 30 80 0	BEEF WELLINGTON, P. 54												
PEARS, P. 60         Wild Rice Salad with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans         370         120         14         49         14         3.5         7         2.5         15         680         6           Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.)         45         5         0         8         0         0         0         0         70         1           Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps         360         250         8         20         28         8         16         3         35         590         4           Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter)         80         25         1         13         3         0         1.5         1         0         5         0           TORTELLINI En BRODO, P. 66         1         120         80         18         22         9         3.5         3.5         1         95         580         1           FRESH HAM, P. 74           Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz)         760         490         57         4         54         21         26         4.5         215         680         0           Ham and Polenta Spoonbread         330         180	Classic Beef Wellington	850	450	48	34	50	20	20	5	290	900	2	
Wild Rice Salad with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans       370       120       14       49       14       3.5       7       2.5       15       680       6         Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.)       45       5       0       8       0       0       0       0       0       70       1         Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps       360       250       8       20       28       8       16       3       35       590       4         Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter)       80       25       1       13       3       0       1.5       1       0       5       0         TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66       Tortellini en Brodo       240       80       18       22       9       3.5       3.5       1       95       580       1         FRESH HAM, P. 74         Fresh HAM, P. 74 <td colsp<="" td=""><td>Chicken Liver Pâté (per 1 Tbs)</td><td>70</td><td>50</td><td>3</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>3</td><td>1.5</td><td>0</td><td>75</td><td>45</td><td>0</td></td>	<td>Chicken Liver Pâté (per 1 Tbs)</td> <td>70</td> <td>50</td> <td>3</td> <td>0</td> <td>6</td> <td>3</td> <td>1.5</td> <td>0</td> <td>75</td> <td>45</td> <td>0</td>	Chicken Liver Pâté (per 1 Tbs)	70	50	3	0	6	3	1.5	0	75	45	0
Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.)       45       5       0       8       0       0       0       0       0       70       1         Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps       360       250       8       20       28       8       16       3       35       590       4         Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter)       80       25       1       13       3       0       1.5       1       0       5       0         TOTTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66         TOTTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66 <td co<="" td=""><td>PEARS, P. 60</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></td>	<td>PEARS, P. 60</td> <td></td>	PEARS, P. 60											
Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps 360 250 8 20 28 8 16 3 35 590 4  Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter) 80 25 1 13 3 0 1.5 1 0 5 0  TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66  Tortellini en Brodo 240 80 18 22 9 3.5 3.5 1 95 580 1  FRESH HAM, P. 74  Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz) 760 490 57 4 54 21 26 4.5 215 680 0  Ham and Polenta Spoonbread 330 180 19 16 21 11 6 1 125 400 1  Croque-Madame Sandwiches 840 400 49 52 45 21 15 3 365 1040 4  Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas 580 210 27 65 24 5 10 6 110 1410 5  COOKIES, P. 80  Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate 160 50 3 23 6 2.5 1 0 20 45 1  Orange Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze 120 50 1 16 6 3.5 1.5 0 30 45 0  Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies 110 45 1 16 5 3 1.5 0 30 80 0	Wild Rice Salad with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans	370	120	14	49	14	3.5	7	2.5	15	680	6	
Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter)         80         25         1         13         3         0         1.5         1         0         5         0           TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66           Tortellini en Brodo         240         80         18         22         9         3.5         3.5         1         95         580         1           FRESH HAM, P. 74           Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz)         760         490         57         4         54         21         26         4.5         215         680         0           Ham and Polenta Spoonbread         330         180         19         16         21         11         6         1         125         400         1           Croque-Madame Sandwiches         840         400         49         52         45         21         15         3         365         1040         4           Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas         580         210         27         65         24         5         10         6         110         1410         5           COOKIES, P. 80           Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocola	Pear, Cranberry, and Blood Orange Mostarda (per 2 Tbs.)	45	5	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	70	1	
TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66  Tortellini en Brodo  240 80 18 22 9 3.5 3.5 1 95 580 1  FRESH HAM, P. 74  Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz) 760 490 57 4 54 21 26 4.5 215 680 0  Ham and Polenta Spoonbread 330 180 19 16 21 11 6 1 125 400 1  Croque-Madame Sandwiches 840 400 49 52 45 21 15 3 365 1040 4  Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas 580 210 27 65 24 5 10 6 110 1410 5  COOKIES, P. 80  Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate 160 50 3 23 6 2.5 1 0 20 45 1  Orange Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze 120 50 1 16 6 3.5 1.5 0 30 45 0  Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies 110 45 1 16 5 3 1.5 0 30 80 0	Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps	360	250	8	20	28	8	16	3	35	590	4	
TORTELLINI EN BRODO, P. 66  Tortellini en Brodo  240  80  18  22  9  3.5  3.5  1  95  580  1  FRESH HAM, P. 74  Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz)  Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon (per 7¾ oz)  Ham and Polenta Spoonbread  330  180  19  16  21  11  6  1  125  400  1  Croque-Madame Sandwiches  840  400  49  52  45  21  15  3  365  1040  4  Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas  COOKIES, P. 80  Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate  160  50  3  23  6  2.5  1  0  20  85  1  Orange Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze  120  50  110  45  16  5  3  1.5  0  30  80  0  80  0  1  95  10  10  11  11  125  10  10  11  11  14.5  15  15  15  16  16  16  16  16  16  1	Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger (per fritter)	80	25	1	13	3	0	1.5	1	0	5	0	
FRESH HAM, P. 74         Cookies, P. 80         Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze         160         490         57         4         54         21         26         4.5         215         680         0           Ham and Polenta Spoonbread         330         180         19         16         21         11         6         1         125         400         1           Croque-Madame Sandwiches         840         400         49         52         45         21         15         3         365         1040         4           Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas         580         210         27         65         24         5         10         6         110         1410         5           COOKIES, P. 80         210         27         65         24         5         10         6         110         1410         5           COOKIES, P. 80           Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate         160         50         3         23         6         2.5         1         0         20         85         1           Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints         90         40         1         11         4.5         2.5 <t< td=""><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></t<>													
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Ham and Polenta Spoonbread       330       180       19       16       21       11       6       1       125       400       1         Croque-Madame Sandwiches       840       400       49       52       45       21       15       3       365       1040       4         Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas       580       210       27       65       24       5       10       6       110       1410       5         COOKIES, P. 80         Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate       160       50       3       23       6       2.5       1       0       20       85       1         Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints       90       40       1       11       4.5       2.5       1.5       0       20       45       1         Orange Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze       120       50       1       16       6       3.5       1.5       0       30       45       0         Lemon-Gingersnap Mini Meringues       50       20       1       7       2.5       1.5       1       0       35       25       0         Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies       110       45<	FRESH HAM, P. 74												
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Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas       580       210       27       65       24       5       10       6       110       1410       5         COOKIES, P. 80       Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate         Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate       160       50       3       23       6       2.5       1       0       20       85       1         Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints       90       40       1       11       4.5       2.5       1.5       0       20       45       1         Orange Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze       120       50       1       16       6       3.5       1.5       0       30       45       0         Lemon-Gingersnap Mini Meringues       50       20       1       7       2.5       1.5       1       0       35       25       0         Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies       110       45       1       16       5       3       1.5       0       30       80       0	•												
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Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies 110 45 1 16 5 3 1.5 0 30 80 0													
	Chocolate-Dipped Chocolate-Apricot Sandwich Cookies	180	80	2	24	9	5	2.5	0	25	50	2	

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional ingre-

 $\ dients\,with\,measured\,amounts\,are\,included; ingredients\,without$ specific quantities are not. Analyses are per serving; when a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used. When the quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper per serving for entrées, and ¼ tsp. salt and % tsp. pepper per serving for side dishes.

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# Tree-Trimming Party

Vegetarian Chopped Liver page 37

Assorted Crostini

Bacon, Leek, and Cheddar Mini Quiches

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Popcorn with Sweet Butter and Sea Salt

page 49

Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Chocolate

page 83

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To drink: Raventos i Blanc L'Hereu de



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Yogurt-Marinated Roast Chicken page 23

Mushroom Salad with Lemon, Thyme, and Parmesan

page 25

Turkey Cutlets and Black Beans with Tangerine-Habanero Mojo

page 25

Jícama, Radish, and Pickled Shallot Salad with Feta

page 16

Carrot and Leek Soup with Herbed Croutons

page 23

Croque-Madame Sandwiches

page 78





#### The Ultimate Christmas Dinner

Sparkling Pomegranate Cocktail FineCooking.com

Gorgonzola and Hazelnut Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps and Mâche

page 63

Classic Beef Wellington page 56

Mashed Potatoes with Caramelized Shallots

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Lemon-Thyme Spinach FineCooking.com

Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream

page 48

To drink: Bussola Ca' del Laito Ripasso, Valpolicella Superiore 2004, Italy



Photographs by Scott Phillips, except top right by Miki Duisterhof; wine recommendations by Patrick Watson at Smith & Vine and the Brooklyn Wine Exchange, Brooklyn, New York



	Cover	Beef & Lamb	Condiments
	Salty Caramel Croquembouche	Classic Beef Wellington 56	Candied Citrus Peel20
	with Ricotta Cream <b>48</b>	Pistachio-Crusted	Pear, Cranberry, and
	Appetizers & Snacks	Lamb Chops <b>30</b>	Blood Orange Mostarda 65
	Apple, Fennel, and Cheddar	Pork	Breakfast
	Cheese Straws <b>51</b>	○ Croque-Madame	Ham and Polenta
	Avocado Green Goddess Dip <b>41</b>	Sandwiches <b>78</b>	Spoonbread <b>77</b>
	Chicken Liver Pâté	Fresh Ham with Rosemary, Garlic, and Lemon	Spiced Yogurt Waffles with Toasted-Pecan Maple Syrup <b>22</b>
	Chipotle Black Bean Dip41	Ham and Polenta	
	Gorgonzola and Hazelnut	Spoonbread <b>77</b>	Desserts & Cookies
	Stuffed Pears with Pancetta Crisps and Mâche	Ham Lo Mein with Shiitake and Snow Peas <b>79</b>	Bittersweet Chocolate Bark with Marcona Almonds52
$\odot$ $\nearrow$	Popcorn with Sweet Butter and Sea Salt <b>49</b>	Fish & Seafood	Burnt-Sugar Vanilla Butter Cookies84
	Roasted Red Pepper and Feta Dip <b>41</b>	Seared Scallops with Cauliflower, Brown Butter, and Basil 28	Chocolate-Dipped Chocolate- Apricot Sandwich Cookies 82
	Vegetarian Chopped Liver37	Shellfish with Fennel, Escarole, and Kale <b>6</b>	Double Dark Chocolate Thumbprints84
	Salads Gorgonzola and Hazelnut	Pasta	Dried Cherry and Almond Biscotti with White Cocolate 83
igotimes	Stuffed Pears with Pancetta  Crisps and Mâche	Cavatappi with Artichokes and Three Cheeses <b>24</b>	Lemon-Gingersnap Mini Meringues85
	Jícama, Radish, and Pickled Shallot Salad with Feta <b>16</b>	Pasta Puttanesca	Orange Butter Cookies with Grand Marnier Glaze 83
	Mushroom Salad with Lemon, Thyme, and Parmigiano25	Vegetarian Mains	Pear Fritters with Lemon and Ginger63
	Soups	Cavatappi with Artichokes and Three Cheeses <b>24</b>	Rosemary-Lemon Tartlets with Pine Nut Shortbread53
$\odot$	Carrot and Leek Soup with Herbed Croutons <b>23</b>	Side Dishes	Salty Caramel Croquembouche with Ricotta Cream48
	Tortellini en Brodo <b>68</b>	Cannellini Beans with Lemon, Roasted Red Peppers, and Bacon	Spiced Rum Fruitcake 38
	Chicken & Turkey	Sicama, Radish, and Pickled	
$\odot$	Pan-Seared Chicken Thighs with Beer and Grainy Mustard	Shallot Salad with Feta <b>16</b>	
	Sauce	Mushroom Salad with Lemon, Thyme, and Parmigiano25	VEGETARIAN: May contain eggs and dairy ingredients
<b>©</b>	Turkey Cutlets and Black Beans with Tangerine-Habanero Mojo Sauce25	Wild Rice with Pears, Sausage, and Candied Pecans <b>64</b>	MAKE AHEAD: Can be completely prepared ahead (may need reheating and a garnish to serve)
	Yogurt-Marinated Roast Chicken23	Sandwiches	OUICV-Under 20 minutes
		⊙ Croque-Madame	Work. Order 30 minutes
		Sandwiches <b>78</b>	_





# the dish

Name: Colin Spoelman

Occupation: Owner and operator of Kings County Distillery

**Age:** 31

Started: Licensed to sell whiskey as of April 14, 2010

Where: Brooklyn, New York

Known for: Making small-batch moonshine Find out more: kingscountydistillery.com

# Colin Spoelman

This Brooklyn-based moonshiner makes whiskey by the flask for a lucky few. BY KELLY ALEXANDER

#### Fine Cooking: So what is moonshine?

Colin Spoelman: As far as I know, there are three definitions: One is that moonshine is alcohol made illegally without government supervision; another is that it's very high-proof alcohol; and the third—the definition I use is that it's clear, un-aged, corn whiskey.

#### FC: You grew up in Kentucky, that hotbed of bourbon. Does that automatically make you familiar with moonshine?

Spoelman: Not necessarily. My dad's a minister, and my parents don't drink. But there was an old lady from my hometown who paid off the local cops and sold moonshine illegally for more than 80 years. There's even a street named after her; she's a legend.

#### FC: Was she your inspiration? Spoelman: Actually, it was this bottle of really high-proof moonshine that I brought from home and started serving at parties. It was pretty disgusting, but everyone loved the idea that it was made by hand. That was the bottle that got me started.

FC: Did you teach yourself? Spoelman: Sort of. I read a book on home distilling and bought a small still online. Then I just dove into it, making whiskey in my kitchen. My first efforts were really bad. Even my friends didn't want to drink it. But I stuck with it, and after about a year I made a smoother, more classic spirit that was actually good.

#### FC: How did your hooch hobby become a business?

Spoelman: Once I started making something worth drinking, my college buddy, David, suggested we team up and sell it.

FC: I bet that was a challenge. Spoelman: Let's just say it took us a year to get our licenses, and another year and a half to get clearance to sell in stores. Plus, our distillery is in a 325-squarefoot room above a warehouse, so we make really small batches. It's inefficient, but we think smallscale distilling makes better whiskey.

# FC: Do you still have your

Spoelman: David and I both work full-time—he's a magazine editor, and I work at an architecture firm—so we distill at night, on the weekends, and on lunch breaks.

#### FC: Tired much?

Spoelman: Yeah. This morning, I had to make a delivery to a restaurant before work, so I lugged a case of whiskey on the subway.

#### FC: What advice would you give to someone who's had a little too much moonshine?

**Spoelman:** In Kentucky, they say to drink milk, but the only thing that works for me is jogging.

Kelly Alexander is an awardwinning food writer who lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.





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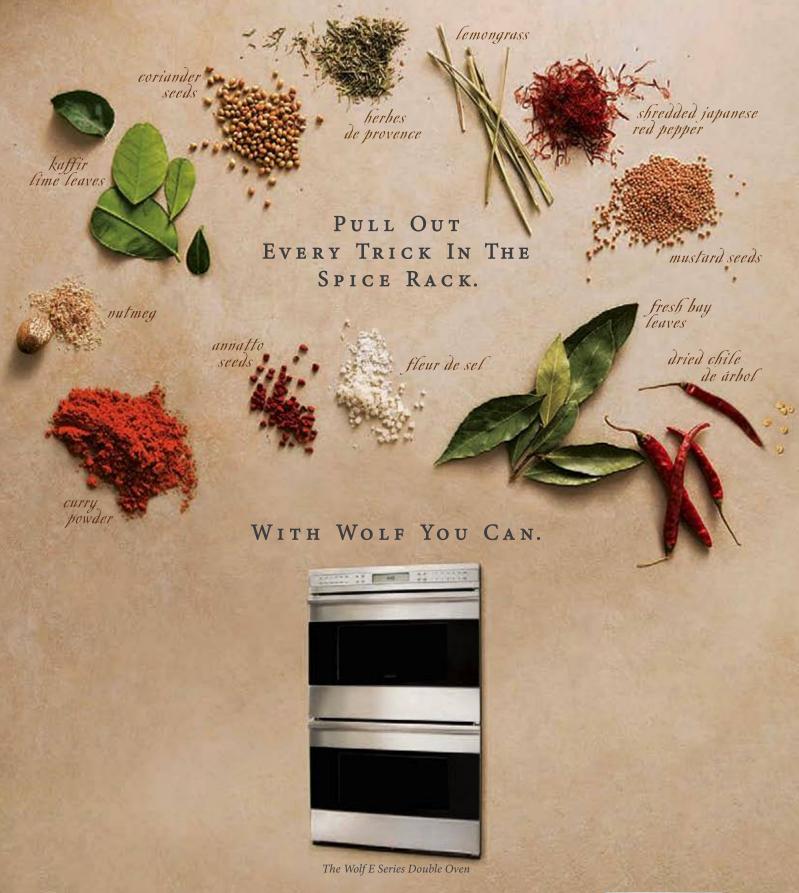
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